The Fading

A Mythic Sidhe Setting Module for the One-on-One RPG

Created by Richard D. Anderson

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A One-on-One RPG Setting Module

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What *The Fading* Is (and How It Uses the One-on-One RPG System)

The Fading is a **setting module** built to sit directly on top of the **One-on-One RPG** core rules. It does not replace the engine, reinvent resolution, or introduce a parallel ruleset. Instead, it provides Éire—its people, pressures, adversaries, and magick—as a complete campaign frame designed to work with the duet structure: **one Director and one Protagonist**, supported by a Companion. If you know how to run One-on-One, you already know how to run *The Fading*—this book simply gives you a world where the core tools (scene framing, consequences, Destiny, and Clocks) become especially potent.

The tone of this module is **mythic, intimate, and pressured**. Éire is not a "high fantasy playground" where the world waits politely for adventure; it is a land that feels **crowded by history** and tightened by change. The Sídhe are not conquerors or wandering heroes in search of treasure—they are a fading people trying to remain real in a world that is forgetting them. That produces stories that lean toward **survival with dignity**, **politics and courtesy as weapons**, and **hard choices** where winning often means paying a price rather than standing triumphant. Violence happens, but it is rarely clean; the more common conflicts are about **exposure**, **sanctuary stability**, **debts**, **oaths**, and the creeping advance of the **Rot**.

Magick in *The Fading* is intentionally **non-wizardly**. It is not built around battlefield spectacle or familiar fantasy spell lists. It is the craft of a hidden nation: tokens, witness, thresholds, and subtle acts that reshape a moment rather than rewrite reality. That makes it excellent for tense, story-forward play—but it also means that players who expect traditional "combat casting" may need to adjust expectations. The module rewards imagination, restraint, and attention to the fiction: where you stand, what you offer, who is watching, what you dare to promise, and what you refuse.

Because of that focus, some concepts here tend to land best with **more experienced roleplayers**—or newer players who enjoy thoughtful, narrative decision-making. The game often asks you to inhabit cultural ideas like **guest-right**, **court etiquette**, **oath consequence**, and **identity under pressure**, and to make choices that are not simply tactical. Success is rarely "I beat the monster"; it is more often "I saved the sanctuary, but now I owe a debt," or "I kept us hidden, but I had to let something else burn." If that sounds like your kind of story, *The Fading* will feel sharp, personal, and deeply playable.

If you want a lighter, more straightforward heroic fantasy experience, you can still use Éire's locations and creatures—but consider softening the social weight of courtesy, reducing Rot pressure, and emphasizing travel-and-adventure over court politics. *The Fading* supports that approach, but its default voice is clear: **beautiful, dangerous, and running out of time.**

BOOK 0 — INTRODUCTION

The Fading

The first lie the waking world tells itself is that it is solid.

Stone seems solid. A road seems permanent. A law seems absolute. A church bell seems louder than any birdsong. And an iron nail—cold and blunt, driven with a human hammer—seems like the most ordinary thing in creation.

Yet Éire has never been solid. Not truly. The island is layered like old cloth, stitched over and over by hands that remembered different maps. Under the farm, there is the forest. Under the forest, there is the older forest. Under the older forest, there is the hill that is not a hill at all, but a doorway with its face turned away.

The Sídhe have always lived in that layered world.

They are not ghosts. They are not dreams. They are a people—older than the parish lines, older than the iron-bound fortresses, older than the songs that now call them "fairies" in a voice meant for children. They are the ones who understand that a threshold is not just a piece of wood, and a bargain is not just air shaped into words. They are the ones who know the old geography: the ringforts that sit upon older rings, the wells that remember, the standing stones that listen, the barrows that are not graves but halls.

Once, the Sídhe were spoken of with fear and respect. Once, a traveler left milk by the door and did not laugh at himself for doing it. Once, a child learned the old courtesies before learning to count. Once, human kings knew better than to cut hawthorn for firewood.

Now the world has a new hunger.

It is not the hunger of wolves. It is not the hunger of famine. It is the hunger of settlement: the steady appetite of plow and fence and road. It eats quietly at first. It says: *We are only building a farm.* It says: *We are only clearing a grove.* It says: *We are only bringing order.*

And then it says: *There is no other world here.*

The Sídhe call this slow devouring **the Fading**.

The Fading is not a single curse. It is not a plague you can burn out of a village. It is the shrinking of the places where the Sídhe can exist as themselves without being torn. It is the closing of thin places. The souring of hospitality. The flattening of stories into children's warnings. The hammering of iron into thresholds that used to be sacred. The hardening of law into something that does not acknowledge older law.

It comes with human footsteps.

The Encroaching Peoples of the Waking World

To the Sídhe, "humanity" is not one banner. It is a tide of different tongues, loyalties, and hungers—some cruel, some desperate, some pious, some merely busy. Human cultures press in from every angle, and they do not always agree with each other. But most share one trait that matters to the Sídhe: when humans win, they make their victory *stay*. They build. They write. They nail things down.

The Celts—whether you name them by tribe, kingdom, or shifting alliance—are the human culture most intertwined with the Sídhe's remaining footholds. Some still know the old courtesies, even when they pretend not to. Some still fear the hollow hills, even when they speak bravely in daylight. Some still leave offerings, though they call it "custom" rather than worship. Many have songs that remember the Sídhe without naming them directly.

But the Celts are also builders. They fortify. They claim land. They cut forests. They set boundaries and defend them with spears. When they are hungry, they expand. When they are afraid, they expand faster.

Other human influences creep through trade, raiding, and faith. Foreign coins pass hand to hand. New words arrive with merchants. New oaths are sworn under new gods. New "saints" are said to stand where old stones once stood. Some human leaders—kings, chieftains, ambitious lords—learn that iron and certainty can drive back anything their grandmothers feared.

And some humans become specialists in the war against the unseen: **iron-hunters**, **witch-finders**, **road-builders**, and the grim sort of cleric who believes the old world is not merely false but sinful.

To the Sídhe, these are not faceless enemies. They are complicated, sometimes pitiable, often dangerous people doing what humans do best: turning wilderness into property, mystery into doctrine, and fear into policy.

The Older Enemies: Fomorians and Fir Bolg Remnants

Not all threats come from the waking world's new hunger. Old wounds fester beneath the grass.

There are **Fomorians** still—remnants, strains, broods, and sea-dark legacies that should have died in older wars. They are not a unified nation. They are a memory of violence that refuses to stay buried. Some dwell in coastal caves and storm-bit islands; some crawl up from bogs and blackwater; some wear human faces and rot them from within. They delight in ruin and corruption. Where the Fading is slow erasure, the Fomorians are **spoiling**: turning what is sacred into something foul.

Fomorians do not need the Sídhe to forget. They want the Sídhe to suffer.

Then there are the **Fir Bolg**—or rather, what remains of them. Once a people of old claim, old labor, and older rights, now fractured into clans, outcasts, and stubborn holdouts. Some Fir Bolg communities still hold land the humans would call barren: stony uplands, bog edges, harsh coastlines. Some have made bitter peace with human kings. Some fight everyone. Some seek alliance with the Sídhe out of shared hatred of human expansion… and some blame the Sídhe for old defeats so deeply that the hatred has become heritage.

Where the Sídhe live in layered worlds, Fir Bolg often live in **hard worlds**: stone, soil, endurance, and the grim arithmetic of territory.

The Sídhe Response: Vanish, Bargain, or Fight

The Sídhe are not agreed on what to do.

Some believe the only winning move is to **vanish deeper**, to retreat into the hollow hills and let the waking world take the surface. These Sídhe become smaller in number, more secretive, more mythlike—surviving by not being found.

Some believe the Sídhe must **bargain**: with human kings, with Fir Bolg chieftains, with saints and spirits, with anyone who can be made to respect old law. These Sídhe cling to the belief that oaths still have teeth. They make alliances. They trade favors. They offer miracles for protection. They let humans pretend they are merely "good folk" or "old spirits" if it buys time.

Some believe the only way to endure is to **fight**: not in open war, which humans can sustain longer, but in raids, sabotage, and targeted vengeance. These Sídhe break roads. They burn ironworks. They ruin harvests that were taken from sacred groves. They haunt the dreams of oath-breakers. They drag iron-hunters into bogs and do not apologize.

The setting begins in the middle of these arguments. The Fading is far enough along that no one can pretend it isn't happening. Yet the Sídhe are not gone—because something stubborn remains in the hills, in the wells, in the old stones, in the last feasts held in hidden halls.

That stubbornness can be a player character.

What You Play

In this setting, the Protagonist is Sídhe—one of six lineages, each a different survival strategy shaped into blood and culture:

- **Moundborn**, the hidden folk of the hollow hill—subtle, adaptive, masters of seeming.
- **Court-Sídhe**, the oath-bound nobility—keepers of hospitality law, bargains, and consequences.
- **Hostborn**, the riders of wind and pursuit—scouts, raiders, defenders of motion and escape.

- **Wellspring Sídhe**, keepers of water memory—mist-walkers, omen-readers, negotiators with wells and rivers.
- **Hearthbound**, ward-crafters of home and threshold—builders of sanctuaries, protectors of rest.
- **Beastmarked**, totem-blooded hunters—wild guardians, pact-bound, shaped by geisa and instinct.

They are not "classes" in the traditional sense. In One-on-One terms, they are **cultural lineages** that grant innate powers and identity; your profession is what you *learn*, what you do, what skills you choose to hone. A Moundborn can be a warrior. A Hostborn can be a healer. A Court-Sídhe can be a scout. The lineage determines what you are **born with** and what your people expect of you—not the limit of your life.

What You Fight For

You are not merely fighting to survive. You are fighting to prevent an entire culture from becoming a bedtime story told incorrectly.

You might fight to keep a single hill from being dug open. You might fight to preserve a sacred well that holds the memory of your court. You might fight to maintain a treaty that keeps a human lord's iron out of a valley. You might fight to rescue a child taken as a curiosity. You might fight to destroy a Fomorian relic before it poisons a river.

You might fight to win a war that cannot be won in the ordinary way… by winning a different kind of war: a war of sanctuaries, bargains, and the careful preservation of places where the Sídhe can still exist.

In this setting, victory is not "kill the dark lord."

Victory is: **the Sídhe are still here next season.**

The Tone of the Setting

This is mythic Ireland viewed from the underside of the story: not pastoral nostalgia, but sacred geography under siege. The tone should feel like:

- a hidden hall lit by hearthfire while rain drums the hill above
- a treaty spoken softly because loud words attract attention
- a road that should not exist, cutting through an old grove
- a feast where laughter is real and grief sits beside it
- a long chase under moonlight, pursued by iron and certainty

Your campaign can lean toward political bargaining, guerrilla resistance, spiritual mystery, horror of old enemies, or tragic romance with the waking world. The core remains the same: **the Sídhe are fading, and the Protagonist refuses to go quietly.**

BOOK 0 — CHAPTER 1

Shared Sídhe Culture

The Sídhe are not a monolith. Their lineages argue, their courts fracture, their survival strategies clash. Yet beneath all that, there is a shared culture that marks them as one people—one way of seeing the world.

To understand the Sídhe, you must understand what they believe is real.

Humans often believe reality is made of objects: stones, trees, bodies, weapons, coins. The Sídhe believe reality is made of **relationships**: between host and guest, between name and named, between threshold and traveler, between land and those who claim it, between the spoken word and the world that hears it.

Objects matter. But to the Sídhe, an object matters most when it is an anchor for a relationship: a ring that seals a vow, a hearth that establishes hospitality, a standing stone that witnesses a bargain, a bowl of water that remembers a face.

This cultural lens shapes everything the Sídhe do—how they build their sanctuaries, how they fight, how they love, how they curse, how they mourn, how they choose what to sacrifice in order to survive.

The Four Universal Truths

Every Sídhe child learns these truths before they learn any lineage-specific tradition. They are taught in lullabies and warnings, in casual corrections at feasts, in the way elders react with sudden seriousness when a certain mistake is made.

1) Cold Iron Bane

Cold iron is not merely a weapon material. To the Sídhe, it is a denial made physical: a thing hammered into shape through heat and force, turned into certainty.

When iron is close, Sídhe feel it. Sometimes as nausea, sometimes as headaches, sometimes as the sensation that their skin does not fit correctly. When iron touches them, it hurts more than it should. When iron pierces them, the wound feels "final" in a way other wounds do not.

Because of this, Sídhe culture treats iron the way humans treat poison. It is not a casual hazard. It is something to be avoided, planned around, respected as an environmental threat.

Sídhe do not make iron tools. They do not wear iron jewelry. They do not hammer iron nails into their thresholds. Even the most pragmatic Sídhe who bargain with humans often refuse to handle iron directly unless desperate.

In war, this creates a cultural style: Sídhe favor weapons of bronze, stone, bone, wood, and worked silver—anything that does not carry iron's harsh certainty. They also favor tactics that avoid prolonged contact: ambush, misdirection, fear, and the use of terrain.

2) Oath-Law: Words Have Teeth

To humans, promises are social. To Sídhe, promises are structural. They are one of the ways the world is held together.

A Sídhe does not speak carelessly. This is not because they are naturally solemn. It is because they have seen what happens when careless words become binding.

A promise made in good faith is an anchor. It grants stability. It creates predictable behavior. It allows trust to exist in a world where concealment is common.

But a promise made badly—vague, manipulative, or hypocritical—creates rot. It invites consequence. In Sídhe thinking, the world itself resents bad faith, and will find ways to punish it.

This is why Sídhe culture places enormous value on:

- clarity of terms
- witnesses (people, stones, water, hearth)
- the exchange of tokens that "hold" the vow
- the concept of sanction when a breach occurs

This is also why Sídhe have a complicated relationship with human religion and human law. Many human systems claim authority over truth and oath. Many explicitly condemn old customs. Where humans swear by saints, Sídhe swear by stones, wells, and witnessed terms. Where human priests may absolve betrayal, Sídhe culture often insists that breach must be named and addressed, or it will poison relationships.

3) Threshold Sensitivity

To a human, a doorway is a doorway. To the Sídhe, a doorway is a treaty between inside and outside.

Thresholds include more than doors:

- bridges
- fords
- gates
- hedges
- stone circles
- the edge of a fire's light
- the line where forest becomes field

Sídhe believe thresholds are points of decision where the world is most easily changed. A threshold can be blessed, warded, cursed, or opened to the wrong thing.

This is why Sídhe etiquette is full of threshold rules:

- do not enter a home uninvited
- do not step across a circle without acknowledging it
- do not cross a ford without paying respect to the water
- do not take from a threshold (milk, bread, salt) without leaving something in exchange

These courtesies are not merely polite—they are spiritual hygiene. They keep sanctuaries stable. They prevent "bleeding" between layers of the world.

4) Otherworld Tell

The Sídhe are not obsessed with secrecy because they enjoy paranoia. They are secretive because their existence depends on not being pulled fully into the waking world's harsh certainty.

Even so, Sídhe actions—especially magickal actions—often leave traces. A faint scent. A chill. A flicker of light. A moment of impossible silence.

In old times, these tells were part of the awe. They reminded humans to show respect. In the time of the Fading, tells have become a liability: iron-hunters follow them, priests call them signs of sin, and skeptical lords use them as proof that something is worth conquering.

Thus Sídhe culture teaches: do not waste wonder. Do not show your hand unless necessary.

The Shape of Sídhe Society

Sídhe society is not one kingdom. It is a web of sanctuaries, kin-houses, courts, and wandering bands—connected by old paths and older obligations.

Courts, Houses, Flights, and Hearths

Different lineages organize differently, but most Sídhe communities fit into four overlapping structures:

- **Courts:** centers of law and treaty, where rank and witness matter most. Courts are not always grand palaces; a court can be a hidden hall, a standing-stone circle, even a longhouse that becomes "court" when the proper people gather.
- **Houses:** extended kin groups tied to particular places—hills, wells, groves, ringforts. Houses are often responsible for sanctuary maintenance and for guarding local secrets.

- **Flights:** mobile bands, often Hostborn-led, that serve as scouts, raiders, escorts, or messengers. Flights move between sanctuaries carrying news and people.
- **Hearths:** domestic cores—Hearthbound-led safe spaces that provide food, repair, rest, and wards. In the time of the Fading, hearths are as strategically important as armies.

A Protagonist may belong to one or more of these structures. A Court-Sídhe could be sworn to a court but raised in a house. A Hostborn might serve a flight that protects multiple hearths. A Wellspring Sídhe might keep a well sanctuary but travel as envoy.

Rank Without Uniformity

Rank exists, but it is not standardized across all Sídhe. It is more like a collection of overlapping systems:

- Court ranks (titles, rights, treaty roles)
- House ranks (elders, wardens, tokenmakers)
- Hunt ranks (flight leaders, trackers, outriders)
- Spirit ranks (those who have pacts with wells, beasts, or stones)

This matters because the time of the Fading makes unified authority difficult. Some courts have grown authoritarian; others have collapsed into family councils. Some flights have become warbands. Some hearths have become the true leaders because everyone depends on them.

The Shared Codes: Hospitality, Courtesy, and the Price of Safety

Hospitality is one of the most powerful shared customs because it makes survival possible in a world full of hiding places.

Host and Guest

A Sídhe host is responsible for the safety of the guest within the declared space. A Sídhe guest is responsible for respecting the host's home and not turning it into a battlefield.

Hospitality can be weaponized. A clever host can bind a dangerous outsider by offering shelter they cannot refuse, then relying on guest-right to limit the outsider's actions. A clever guest can manipulate a host by playing on shame and custom.

Yet most Sídhe treat hospitality as sacred, not merely strategic. They remember old winters when a single hearth saved a line from extinction.

Courtesy as Signal

Sídhe courtesy is not empty politeness. It is a set of signals that communicate:

- I come in peace
- I acknowledge your claim to this place
- I understand the law you live under
- I will pay for what I take

This is why insults are dangerous. In Sídhe culture, an insult is often a declaration: *I do not recognize your claim.* That is how feuds begin.

Names: The Most Precious Thing

Sídhe names are layered like the world.

Most Sídhe keep at least two:

- a **courtesy name** used with outsiders and casual acquaintances
- a **true name** used only with kin, sworn allies, or at sacred sites

Some keep three or more:

- a house-name tied to place
- a court-title
- a secret name used in ritual or when traveling dangerous paths

This cultural practice exists because names are power. Even among the Sídhe, a true name can be used to compel, to curse, or to protect. Among humans, name-theft is a common tactic for iron-hunters and hedge-witches who know enough old lore to be dangerous.

Thus, Sídhe children are taught early: do not give your true name lightly. Do not let it be overheard. Do not carve it into things that can be stolen.

Sacred Geography: Hills, Wells, Stones, and the Old Paths

To the Sídhe, the island is not a map. It is a set of living relationships.

- **Hollow Hills and Ringforts**

These are not merely ancient human structures. They are places where the world is thin—where a door can exist without looking like a door.

Moundborn and many houses maintain these sites. They are sanctuaries, storehouses, feasting halls, and sometimes courts. They are also targets: humans dig them for treasure; Fomorians desecrate them; Fir Bolg claim them as ancestral rights.

- **Wells and Fords**

Wellspring Sídhe teach that water is memory. Wells are not just water sources. They are witnesses, archives, and spirit homes.

A ford is a threshold more dangerous than a door because it is shared with the river's will. Many Sídhe customs around offerings and courtesy are strongest at fords.

- **Standing Stones and Circles**

Stones witness. Stones remember. Stones do not forgive easily.

Sídhe bargains often call upon stones as witnesses. Some stones are old enough to have witnessed the wars against the Fomorians. Some stones carry pacts that still matter.

Humans sometimes topple stones to build walls. Sídhe regard this as an act of deep ignorance—or deliberate insult.

- **The Hollow Ways**

The Hollow Ways are not "roads." They are the hidden passages between layers: hedge-lines that lead somewhere they shouldn't, barrow-doors that open only at certain angles, mist paths that go from one well to another.

Not everyone can find them. Not everyone can return.

In the time of the Fading, the Hollow Ways are both lifeline and trap. They allow the Sídhe to move refuges and people. They also allow enemies—especially those who learn to follow tells—to hunt them.

Work, Craft, and the Non-Iron World

Because iron is poison to the Sídhe, they maintain a parallel material culture:

- **wood, bone, stone, leather**
- **bronze and worked silver**
- **carved toggles and braided cords instead of nails**
- **rowan, salt, herbs** used as ward components
- **tokens** that serve both practical and spiritual function

This makes Sídhe craftsmanship distinctive. Their gear often looks beautiful because beauty is part of function: a well-made token holds better. A carefully carved clasp is less likely to fail. A knot-work cord can be both belt and ward.

Hearthbound take pride in this. Court-Sídhe turn it into formal regalia. Beastmarked turn it into practical hunting gear. Hostborn keep it light and mobile. Wellspring Sídhe keep it water-safe. Moundborn keep it subtle and easy to hide.

A Brief Overview of the Six Lineages in the Time of the Fading

All Sídhe share the truths above, but each lineage responds differently to the current crisis.

- **Moundborn:** preserve sanctuaries by secrecy; hide halls; misdirect road builders; escort refugees along hidden paths.
- **Court-Sídhe:** negotiate treaties; enforce hospitality law; build coalitions; sanction oath-breakers; maintain legitimacy.
- **Hostborn:** raid ironworks; move people fast; hunt threats before they root; protect moving sanctuaries and messengers.
- **Wellspring Sídhe:** guard sacred wells; use mist and omen; preserve memory; detect blight early; bargain with water-spirits.
- **Hearthbound:** build and maintain safehouses; keep people fed and rested; craft wards and charms; stabilize communities.

- **Beastmarked:** defend wild corridors; hunt blight-creatures; resist settlement; live by geisa and totem pacts; strike hard.

In play, these differences create friction and drama. A Court-Sídhe may demand diplomacy while Hostborn push for sabotage. A Hearthbound may insist on protecting innocents while Beastmarked argue that softness is how the Sídhe die. A Moundborn may prioritize secrecy while Wellspring insists memory must be shared.

This is not a flaw. It is the setting's engine: survival requires multiple strategies, and none is sufficient alone.

The Shared Struggle: Staying Real

Ultimately, the shared Sídhe culture is a set of tools for staying real in a world that wants to reduce them to folklore.

- Cold iron is the enemy because it represents certainty without relationship.
- Oath-law is sacred because it forces relationship to matter.
- Thresholds are guarded because they are where relationships change.
- Names are protected because they are the core relationship between self and world.
- Sacred places are defended because they are where the layered world still breathes.

And beneath every feast, every bargain, every raid, every ward, there is the same quiet fear:

If the last person forgets to leave milk by the door... do we cease to be?

The Protagonist's answer is action. Not abstract philosophy. Not despair.

Action.

A road can be broken. A treaty can be enforced. A well can be guarded. A child can be rescued. A Fomorian relic can be burned. A sanctuary can be moved before iron finds it.

The Sídhe are fading—yes.

But fading is not gone.

Not yet.

BOOK 0 — CHAPTER 2

Factions of the Waking World & Old Enemies

The Sídhe do not fight "the world." They fight **pressures**—people with hunger, people with fear, people with doctrine, and people with old grudges that never truly cooled.

In earlier ages, the Sídhe could afford to treat humanity as a superstition that wandered through the same landscape like deer: occasionally dangerous, often avoidable, rarely permanent. Now the waking world builds in ways that **change what places are**, not just who stands in them. A road is not merely a path; it is an assertion. A palisade is not merely timber; it is a boundary with teeth. A bell is not merely a sound; it is an announcement of authority that carries across valleys and into sanctuaries.

The Fading advances because the waking world multiplies its anchors—iron nails, written claims, fenced fields, sanctified stones—until the layered reality the Sídhe rely upon becomes thin, unreliable, and finally hostile.

The factions below are not "monsters." They are human systems at work—plus the older enemies that were never truly defeated, only scattered.

The Waking World: Human Powers and Pressures

- **The Gaelic Kings and Clan-Lords**

What they want: land, tribute, legitimacy, security
How they take it: alliances, hostage-taking, cattle raids, boundary stones, seasonal musters

The island is divided into shifting patchworks of kingship—some old, some newly ambitious, some propped up by marriage webs and threatened by cousins sharpening knives in their own halls. A king's authority is measured in cattle, swords, and the number of hearths that answer his call. When harvests fail, raids increase. When raids increase, fortifications spread. When fortifications spread, iron appears in more places.

Many Gaelic rulers still carry the old fear in their bones. They do not laugh at hill-stories as easily as later peoples might. Some even keep a private practice of offerings "for luck." But fear and respect do not prevent expansion; they often sharpen it. If a lord believes a valley is haunted, he may decide that the solution is not avoidance—it is conquest and cleansing.

Notable figure: King Donnán of the Iron Crown

A war-king with a practical mind and a reputation for building where others merely threaten. Donnán does not hate the Sídhe as demons—he treats them as a strategic nuisance. He rewards road crews, blacksmiths, and men who can "solve problems." His court includes advisors who understand enough old lore to be dangerous, and he is rumored to keep a box of barrow-tokens taken from a raided mound—"proof," he says, that the old world can be looted like any other.

Notable figure: Lady Aifric of the Thorn-Gate

A clan-lord's daughter who secretly maintains guest-right customs older than the church that watches her. She has sheltered Sídhe refugees under the excuse of "lost travelers," not out of love for them but out of belief that old law still protects her lands. She is walking a knife-edge: if her father's rivals learn what she does, her household becomes a target.

How they appear in play:

- A king offers an alliance that would "protect" a sanctuary—at the price of revealing it.

- A clan feud turns a valley into a battlefield, forcing Sídhe sanctuaries to relocate.
- A hostage exchange includes a Sídhe child mistaken for a human changeling.
- A lord's new boundary stones cut across a thin place, souring the land.

- **The Church and Its Many Faces**

What they want: souls, order, moral authority, obedience
How they take it: preaching, sanctification, bells, written record, rites against "spirits"

The Church is not a single personality. Some abbots are gentle and pragmatic—concerned with famine relief, learning, and peace. Some are severe and convinced that anything outside their doctrine is a threat to salvation. Some are politically savvy, acting as negotiators between kings and clans. What unites them is their tendency to **name** the world in a way that leaves less room for layered reality.

A holy well that once accepted offerings becomes a "saint's well" with a new story. A standing stone becomes a marker for a cross. A grove becomes an "old pagan place" to be cut down. In some regions, this transformation is peaceful and gradual; in others, it is forceful—backed by kings who want a single authority to justify expansion.

To the Sídhe, bells are especially hateful. They carry through fog, across fields, into the edges of hidden halls. A bell is a public claim: *This place belongs to the waking world. This place is named. This place is counted.*

Notable figure: Abbot Ciarán of the Nine Psalms

Ciarán is intelligent, weary, and deeply convinced that the old ways are not merely harmless superstition. He believes bargains with the Sídhe are bargains with temptation. Yet he is not a frothing zealot. He is dangerous precisely because he is careful: he keeps records, sends letters, trains men to recognize "tells," and places sanctified tokens at thresholds.

Ciarán's tragedy is that he truly believes he is saving people. The harm he does is not fueled by cruelty—it is fueled by certainty.

Notable figure: Sister Muirenn, the Quiet Scribe

A young nun who has seen something at a well she cannot explain—something merciful. She keeps a secret journal of encounters and wonders whether the Church is naming the world too tightly. If discovered, her doubt would be punished. If protected, she could become an ally—or a complicated bridge between worlds.

How they appear in play:

- A monastery expands its lands, fencing off a sacred ford.
- A priest performs rites that weaken a sanctuary's threshold.
- A village is whipped into fear of changelings and begins iron "protections."
- A sympathetic cleric seeks help against a Fomorian blight—quietly.

- **Iron-Hunters and Nail-Men**

What they want: payment, prestige, security, dominance over the unseen
How they take it: traps, iron tokens, salt lines, dogs, informants, violence

As fear becomes policy, specialists emerge. Iron-hunters are not necessarily official soldiers; they are often semi-legal forces hired by lords, monasteries, or frightened communities. They carry cold iron openly and make a show of it. They nail iron into lintels. They drag chains across thresholds. They lace cattle pens with iron filings. They train dogs to follow the scent of glamour's tell.

They are the waking world's answer to what it cannot comfortably admit is real: if the Sídhe exist, then the Sídhe must be controllable. If they are controllable, they can be hunted. If they can be hunted, then the world is solid after all.

Notable figure: Eadric Nailhand

Eadric is a captain among iron-hunters, known for hammering nails into sacred places as a signature. He claims he is protecting humanity from "hill-devils," but his true hunger is simpler: he wants to prove that nothing can hide from him. Eadric has survived too many encounters with the Sídhe to be purely ignorant—he knows their customs, which makes him far more dangerous. He has also, quietly, begun collecting fae tokens—partly as trophies, partly because he suspects they can buy him power.

Notable figure: Brannoc of the Salt Rope

A trap-maker who sells "protection kits" to frightened villages: salt lines, iron hooks, blessed rope. Brannoc is not a warrior; he is a merchant of fear. He might bargain with the Sídhe if it profits him, and he might betray them if it profits him more.

How they appear in play:

- A safehouse is compromised by iron nails hidden in the lintel.
- A captured Sídhe is displayed as proof that the old world can be dominated.
- An iron-hunter offers "mercy" in exchange for a sanctuary's location.
- A village's protections accidentally trap a human child in a threshold curse.

Notable figure: Tomás "Foxhands"

A clever charmer who sells "fae luck" for coin and occasionally for blackmail. He has enough truth to be dangerous and enough greed to be unreliable. He might become a rival, an informant, or a problem that keeps returning.

How they appear in play:

- A hedge-witch asks the Sídhe to cure a blight they cannot stop.
- A charmer has stolen a true name and is using it as leverage.
- A village depends on offerings at a well—then a priest forbids it.
- A human practitioner seeks refuge from iron-hunters… in a Sídhe sanctuary.

- **Hedge-Witches, Charmers, and Folk Practitioners**

What they want: survival, leverage, reputation, secret knowledge
How they take it: cures, curses, bargains, tokens, whispered rites

Not all human interaction with the Sídhe is hostile. Many rural communities maintain old practices: offerings at wells, protective herbs, spoken courtesies that linger under new faith. Hedge-witches and charmers often sit at the uneasy intersection—sometimes respected, sometimes feared, sometimes hunted by the Church, sometimes hired by lords.

Some hedge-witches treat the Sídhe as dangerous neighbors and keep their distance. Others attempt bargains. A few are reckless enough to steal names, bind tokens, or compel favors. The Sídhe have little patience for human practitioners who think folklore is a toolkit. Yet desperation makes everyone bold.

Notable figure: Old Nessa of the Rowan Bowl

A healer whose cures work too well to be purely herbal. Nessa claims her knowledge comes from dreams. The Sídhe suspect she once sheltered a Wellspring envoy who taught her offerings and water etiquette. She is an informal ally to the fading courts, though her loyalty is ultimately to her village. If forced to choose, she may choose humans—unless the Protagonist gives her a reason not to.

- **Coastal Raiders and Foreign Influence**

What they want: loot, captives, outposts, trade dominance
How they take it: swift ships, coastal violence, bargaining with local rivals

The sea brings people who do not share the island's old courtesies. Raiders strike coastal settlements, take captives, burn stores, vanish. Some come to stay—building fortified coastal holds and trading as often as they raid. Their presence reshapes local politics: kings hire raiders, fight raiders, marry into raider families, or pretend raiders do not exist until it is too late.

To the Sídhe, these outsiders are dangerous partly because they do not recognize the island's layered rules. They step where they shouldn't. They hammer iron into ancient stone without fear. They take what looks valuable and unknowingly steal an anchor-token that held a sanctuary stable for centuries.

Notable figure: Jarl Hrafn the Harbor-Wolf

A sea-king who believes the old stories are real and treats them as a challenge, not a taboo. Hrafn would happily raid a hollow hill if he thought treasure lay inside, but he is also the sort of man who might bargain if a bargain buys him advantage. His pragmatism makes him unpredictable—sometimes the worst enemies are those who will treat the unseen world as another marketplace.

How they appear in play:

- Raiders take captives from a village under Sídhe protection, forcing a rescue.
- A foreign outpost is built on a thin place, making the land unstable.
- A raider priest brings a new rite that interferes with old thresholds.
- Trade introduces iron goods deep into rural regions that once avoided them.

Old Enemies: What Never Truly Left

- **Fir Bolg Remnants — The Stone-Right Clans**

What they want: territory, recognition, vengeance, survival
How they take it: harsh alliances, land claims, endurance warfare, ancestral law

The Fir Bolg are not gone. They are rarely unified. They survive as fragmented clans—some hidden in uplands and bog edges, some folded into human society under new names, some maintaining bitter independence in places too harsh for comfortable settlement.

Fir Bolg culture (as it survives) is built on **land-right** and **labor-memory**: who cleared which stones, who bled for which field, who buried their dead under which hill. They view the Sídhe with a complicated mixture of resentment and kinship. In some tales, Fir Bolg feel dispossessed by the Tuatha Dé Danann's coming; in others, they have lived beside the Sídhe long enough that their hatred has softened into weary rivalry. In the time of the Fading, Fir Bolg see the human tide and realize that if the Sídhe vanish entirely, the Fir Bolg will be next.

Yet alliance is difficult when pride is ancestral.

Notable figure: Chieftain Cenn Fódla "Stonehand"

Cenn Fódla is an old Fir Bolg war-leader whose hands are scarred as if from hauling stone all his life. He believes the Sídhe are not saviors but rivals—yet he also understands that iron expansion threatens everything old. He will bargain, but only on terms that recognize Fir Bolg rights. He is more likely to respect a Hearthbound ward-crafter or a Beastmarked guardian than a Court-Sídhe noble, whom he views as "words without calluses."

Notable figure: Bríde of the Bog Spears

A Fir Bolg scout-captain who knows the edges of sanctuaries and the hidden ways through wetland that even Hostborn respect. Bríde has worked alongside the Sídhe in secret raids against ironworks. She is the sort of ally who will bleed for you—if you never insult her clan with careless court talk.

Fir Bolg Methods and Threats

- They set **territorial traps**: stone cairn markers that mean "leave or be hunted."
- They fight endurance wars: sabotage, starvation, winter pressure.
- They may demand **tribute** from Sídhe sanctuaries "for protection."
- They may offer refuge—then insist on dominance.

How they appear in play:

- A Fir Bolg clan claims the ringfort that shelters your house.
- An alliance is offered: help them drive out humans, and they help you preserve thin places.
- A Fir Bolg feud spills into sacred geography, destabilizing a sanctuary.
- A Fir Bolg relic—an ancestral stone—anchors a Hollow Way, and someone steals it.

- **Fomorian Strains — The Sea-Dark and the Blight-Legacies**

What they want: ruin, dominance, corruption, feeding
How they take it: raids, curses, blight, bargains that rot from within

If humanity is slow erasure, the Fomorians are **active spoilage**. They are not merely "monsters." They are an old hostility that remembers ancient wars and refuses peace. Some are brutish and physical—towering raiders with sea-salt blood and cruel humor. Some are subtle—whisperers that bargain in exchange for rot. Some are almost spiritual: a hunger in the water, a sickness that speaks in dreams.

Many Sídhe believe the Fomorians cannot truly create, only twist. They cannot build sanctuaries; they can only infest them. They cannot keep guest-right; they can only violate it. They cannot honor oaths; they can only mimic them long enough to trap a fool.

Notable figure: Muirgen Deep-Tusk

A Fomorian raider-lord who appears in storm seasons along the western coast. Muirgen's tusk-like teeth are stained dark, and his laughter is said to carry like surf. He takes captives not merely for labor but for humiliation—forcing them to carry blighted tokens into sacred places. He has a particular hatred for Wellspring Sídhe, who can sense his corruption in water.

Notable figure: The Grey Widow of Loch Scáth

Not all Fomorian threats are armies. The Grey Widow is a corruption-personality that lives near a deep lake where reflections behave wrongly. She offers bargains: *Bring me your enemy's true name and I will drown their luck.* Her "gifts" always have hidden costs that spread rot into households and courts.

Notable figure: The Brood of the Black Kelp Crown

A coastal strain that wears living seaweed like regalia and breeds blight-creatures in tidal caves. Their presence makes fish rot, makes nets tear, makes sailors vanish. They have begun bribing human raiders—offering safe storms in exchange for iron and captives.

Fomorian Methods and Threats

- **Blight tokens** placed in wells, under hearthstones, in barrows.
- **Raid-and-vanish** warfare that leaves fear behind.
- **Rot-bargains**: deals that seem helpful but spread corruption.
- **Desecration**: turning sacred sites into haunted traps.

How they appear in play:

- A well's water tastes wrong; the memory inside it is sick.
- A friend returns from the coast with a "gift" that brings nightmares.
- A Fomorian strain uses human iron-hunters as disposable tools.
- A sanctuary hall begins to echo with unfamiliar laughter at night.

- **The Forgotten Third Enemy: Despair and Division**

The Sídhe rarely name this as an enemy, because naming it gives it shape. But it exists.

The Fading pressures every court into hard choices: vanish, bargain, fight. Those choices break friendships. They fracture houses. They tempt betrayal. They turn hospitality into suspicion and make every tell feel like a death sentence.

Some of the most dangerous "enemies" are Sídhe who believe they have already lost.

- A Court-Sídhe noble who sells sanctuary locations in exchange for human protection.
- A Hostborn leader who escalates raids until a king responds with full war.
- A Wellspring seer who refuses to share warnings because "no one listens anyway."
- A Hearthbound matron who locks her doors and lets outsiders die to keep her hearth safe.

These are not villains for the sake of villainy. They are the setting's tragedy made human—made personal.

Notable Ancient Figures in the Land's Memory

Certain names still move through the island like weather. Whether they live, sleep, or exist only as memory-anchors depends on the tone you choose, but every Sídhe knows them.

- **The Dagda**, remembered as the father of feasts and bargains, whose laughter once shook hidden halls.

His great cauldron is said to have been carried into a mound that no road has found since.

- **Brigid**, flame and craft, honored by Hearthbound and feared by Fomorians who cannot bear clean fire. Some say her blessing still warms certain hearthstones.
- **Lugh of the Long Hand**, whose spear-light once led the Host in older wars; his name is still spoken by Hostborn before hard rides.
- **The Morrígan**, whose presence clings to battlefields and crow-flights; Beastmarked Raven-lines sometimes claim she still bargains in blood and omen.

Whether these are "gods," kings, or mythic ancestors matters less than this: the land remembers them, and memory can be weaponized.

Special Locations of Note in Chapter 2

These places matter because factions contest them, defile them, or use them.

- **Tara** — seat of human kingship; a place where authority is proclaimed loudly enough that nearby thin places shiver.
- **Emain Macha** — a region haunted by old warrior stories; the boundary between glory and grief feels thin.
- **The western storm-coasts** — where Fomorian strains test the shoreline like wolves.
- **The Bog of Allen** — a vast wetland where Fir Bolg remnants vanish and where the Hollow Ways sometimes run like veins.

BOOK 0 — CHAPTER 3

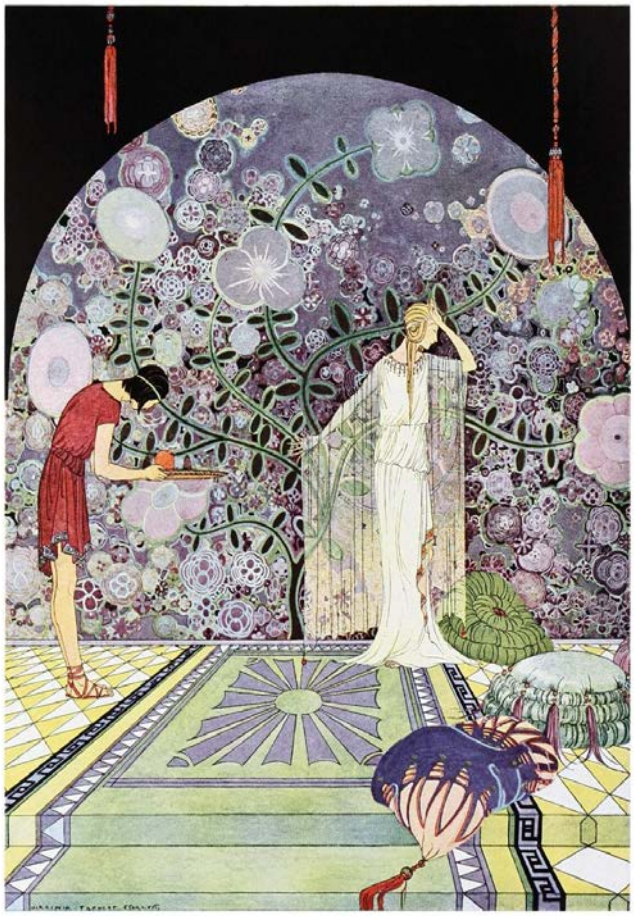
Sacred Geography & Sanctuaries

To the Sídhe, Éire is not a single world. It is a stack of worlds pressed close together like pages of a book. Most humans live on the top page and rarely think about what lies beneath. The Sídhe live in the margin—between lines, between seasons, between the inside of a home and the night outside its door.

Sacred geography is how the Sídhe survive. It is not superstition. It is logistics.

A sanctuary is not merely a hidden building. It is a place where the layered world can still be navigated without tearing the Sídhe apart. It is a place where old law still holds. It is a place where a name can be spoken safely.

In the time of the Fading, sanctuaries are not luxuries. They are oxygen.



The Four Sacred Anchors

Most Sídhe sanctuaries rely on at least one of these anchors. Powerful sanctuaries often combine two or more.

1) The Hollow Hill (Barrow-Halls and Mound Doors)

A hollow hill is the classic Sídhe anchor: a mound, cairn, or green rise that looks like ordinary geography until it isn't.

What it is:
A hollow hill is a **threshold disguised as landscape**. The door is not always a door. It might be a stone that turns only from a particular angle. A seam in the grass visible only in rainlight. A hawthorn tree whose shadow falls wrong at dusk.

Who keeps them:

- Moundborn hillwardens
- Court-Sídhe who maintain legal sanctuaries inside ancient halls
- Hearthbound who keep the domestic life functioning inside

How the Fading attacks them:
Humans dig mounds for treasure. They quarry stones. They plow too near. They hammer iron into the earth. Even when a hollow hill is not physically opened, repeated disrespect can "thicken" the boundary until doors become unreliable.

Notable location: Brú na Bóinne (The Great Barrow Complex)

A place of ancient engineering and older listening. Some say it is not one hall but many, connected by Hollow Ways that only open during particular celestial alignments. The Sídhe whisper that one of the Dagda's feasts is still "caught" inside—always beginning, never ending—because someone swore an oath there that was never concluded.

Notable character: Niamh Bracken-Veil, Hillwarden of Grianmhar

A Moundborn keeper whose sanctuary is said to be invisible from three directions and obvious from the fourth—because she likes to remind the world that secrecy is a choice, not a weakness.

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2) The Well (Memory, Omen, and Spirit Contract)

Wells are not merely water sources. They are **archives**. They remember faces, grief, and promises. The Sídhe treat them as witnesses.

What it is:
A sacred well is a **stable point where the land's memory pools**. Offerings matter because they are not bribery—they

are acknowledgment of relationship. A well that is treated as a machine becomes hostile or silent. A well treated as a neighbor speaks.

Who keeps them:

- Wellspring Sídhe
- Hearthbound who rely on the well for sanctuary stability
- Court-Sídhe who swear oaths by water-witness

How the Fading attacks them:
The Church renames wells. Lords cap wells. Farmers pollute wells. Fomorians spoil wells. Sometimes the worst is not destruction but conversion: a well still exists, but its story is replaced so completely that the Sídhe can no longer safely use it.

Notable location: Tobar Glass (The Glass Well)

Hidden in a fold of land where mist collects even in summer. The water shows not your face but your **intent**—and it is known to refuse the dishonest. Wellspring envoys use it to judge whether a bargain partner is dangerous.

Notable character: Siofra of Lough Glass, Water-Witness

A Wellspring seer who believes the island's memory is the only thing strong enough to resist the Fading. She collects names the way others collect weapons. Her fear is not death—it is forgetting.

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3) The Standing Stone (Witness and Boundary)

Stones are the oldest witnesses. They do not move quickly, but they hold grudges longer than living things.

What it is:
A standing stone is an **anchor of agreement**. Many Sídhe treaties are not "written" but spoken in the presence of stones that have witnessed countless seasons. A stone circle is a courtroom as much as it is a ritual place.

Who keeps them:

- Court-Sídhe heralds and sanctioners
- Moundborn who hide "stone doors" in plain sight
- Beastmarked guardians who treat stones as territorial elders

How the Fading attacks them:
Humans topple stones to build walls. They carve crosses into them. They drag them for construction. Even without physical destruction, careless violence near stones can sour them—stones do not like bad faith.

Notable location: Uisneach (The Navel Hill)

A place where boundaries meet and the land feels like it is holding its breath. Legends claim it is a gathering point for the old powers. In the time of the Fading, Uisneach is heavily contested—human kings want it for legitimacy, the Church wants it sanctified, and the Sídhe want it **unclaimed**.

Notable character: Ailbhe of the White Torc, Third Witness of Uisneach

A Court-Sídhe herald whose entire identity is tied to witness-law. Ailbhe has sanctioned oath-breakers so ruthlessly that even some Sídhe fear her. Yet she is also one of the few who can negotiate without being devoured by human politics.

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4) The Hearth (Domestic Sanctity and Survival)

The hearth is the smallest sacred anchor and, in the time of the Fading, often the most important.

What it is:
A hearth is a **claimed inside**. It turns chaos into rest. It makes hospitality possible. It gives children sleep without nightmares. It is the daily proof that the Sídhe are still a people, not merely fugitives.

Who keeps them:
Hearthbound—always, even when others pretend otherwise.

How the Fading attacks them:
Fomorians spoil hearths with blight and nightmare. Humans raid safehouses. Iron-hunters hammer nails into lintels. Despair makes hearthkeepers turn inward and refuse strangers.

Notable location: The Nine-Lintel Refuge

A moving sanctuary—part cottage, part hidden hall—maintained by Hearthbound networks. It is said to have nine thresholds, each tied to a different safe route. The Refuge survives because it refuses to stay still. It is a symbol of the new Sídhe strategy: sanctuary as migration.

Notable character: Rua Hearth-Thread, Matron of Nine Lintels

A Hearthbound leader who has outlived three courts. Rua does not care about grand speeches. She cares about food stores, clean water, and whether a child can sleep. Her anger, when roused, is terrifying precisely because it is practical.

The Hollow Ways — The Living Map Beneath the Map

The Hollow Ways are the Sídhe's circulatory system. They are not roads built by hands; they are routes that exist because the land allows them.

What they are:

- A hedge gap that opens only when you carry a token
- A barrow seam that appears only at dusk
- A stream path that loops you to another well
- A stone shadow that falls like a doorway at the right season

The Hollow Ways are not always safe. They can twist. They can steal time. They can deliver you to the wrong side of a bargain if you travel in bad faith. In the old era, Sídhe traveled them with confidence. Now, the Ways are under pressure:

- human settlement interferes with old routes
- iron "thickens" boundaries
- Fomorians infest thin places
- desperate Sídhe misuse paths, fraying them

Notable location: The Hawk-Thread Path

A Hollow Way that runs along high ridgelines, visible only to those who can read wind and bird flight. Hostborn Flights use it to move refugees and strike ironworks. It is rumored that Lugh once walked this route, and that the path "remembers" courage.

Notable character: Fiachra Gale-Spear, Huntleader of the Third Flight

A Hostborn leader who treats the island like a battlefield map. Fiachra believes sanctuaries that cannot move are already dead. His Flight has saved dozens of Sídhe by escorting them through Hollow Ways while iron-hunters searched the surface roads.

Types of Sanctuaries in the Time of the Fading

In earlier ages, a sanctuary could be assumed to last generations. Now sanctuaries must be designed with failure in mind.

1) Deep Sanctuaries (Old Halls)

These are the great hollow halls—barrow courts, ancient mound-feasting places, stone-witness chambers. They are powerful and stable... until discovered.

Strength: strong layered protection; deep memory; cultural morale
Weakness: hard to relocate; catastrophic if compromised

Example: The Hall of Rowan Oaths
A hidden court-hall where every pillar bears a carved knot representing a treaty. Some knots are cut—signifying breaches that still bleed consequence into the present.

2) Surface Sanctuaries (Veiled Homes)

Cottages, farms, abandoned towers, forest lodges—places that look human but are warded and held by Sídhe etiquette.

Strength: easy to hide among human settlements; flexible; good for diplomacy
Weakness: vulnerable to raids; dependent on careful threshold practice

Example: The Weaver's House of Coill Rua
A "human" house whose loom is actually a ward engine. Those who sleep beneath its rafters dream of doors they can use to escape.

3) Moving Sanctuaries (Refuge Routes)

Caravans, Flights, hidden wagons, boats, and wandering hearth networks.

Strength: difficult to pin down; adapts quickly
Weakness: exhausting; strains hospitality; risks fracturing community

Example: The Nine-Lintel Refuge (above)

4) Wild Sanctuaries (Totem Grounds)

Places protected not by walls but by **pacts**—with beasts, with stones, with forest spirits, with bog-lights that obey old agreements.

Strength: hard for humans to "understand," therefore hard to conquer
Weakness: vulnerable to Fomorian corruption and to human burning/clearing

Example: The Stag Crown Glade
A Beastmarked sanctuary where antlered stones mark the boundary. Hunters who enter disrespectfully are said to lose their way until they collapse.

Notable character: Bran Antlered, Keeper of the Crown Glade
A Beastmarked guardian who speaks little and listens to the forest like it is a council. Bran's geis is simple and brutal: he must never refuse the defense of his ground. This makes him reliable—and dangerously predictable.

Sacred Places of Note Across Éire

Use these as campaign pillars—sites to protect, reclaim, bargain over, or mourn.

Rathcroghan (The Queen's Threshold)

A place where sovereignty myths cling to the soil. Court-Sídhe treat it as a political and spiritual battleground; human kings treat it as legitimacy; Fomorians treat it as a prize to desecrate.

The Burren (Stone-Book Country)

A strange limestone land where the ground looks like cracked bone. Hidden chambers and stone-witness sites are common. It is easy to get lost, which makes it attractive to Moundborn—and deadly when iron-hunters bring hounds.

The Bog of Allen (The Quiet Hunger)

A vast wetland that swallows roads and secrets alike. Fir Bolg remnants know it intimately. Fomorian blight sometimes breeds here. Wellspring Sídhe say the bog is a mouth that remembers everything it consumes.

Slieve Gullion (The Listening Mountain)

A mountain with a reputation for wrong echoes. Hostborn use it as a navigation marker; Court-Sídhe treat it as a witness-site; some claim a sleeping hall beneath it holds a relic of Lugh's war-season.

Skellig Edge (The Storm Sanctum)

A harsh coastal sanctuary zone where foreign influence and Fomorian sea-pressures collide. Monks, raiders, and sea-dark strains all covet it. Wellspring Sídhe consider it a "warning place"—storms gather around it when oaths are broken nearby.

The Land's History as Living Pressure

The Sídhe do not experience history as "the past." Old events leave residues:

- A battlefield becomes a place where crows gather too quickly.
- A broken treaty becomes a valley where no harvest thrives.
- A desecrated well becomes a source of nightmares.
- A hill opened by greed becomes a door that will never close properly again.

Some Sídhe claim the greatest ancient figures—Dagda, Brigid, Lugh, the Morrígan—are not "gone," but embedded into sacred geography like deep roots. Whether that is literally true or metaphorically powerful is a choice for your table. Either way, their names function as **cultural magnets**: they draw Sídhe behavior, inspire factions, and shape the politics of sanctuaries.

What This Means for Play

A campaign in *The Fading* is not only about fighting enemies. It is about **keeping places viable**:

- protecting a sanctuary's threshold
- moving refugees along Hollow Ways

- negotiating a well's favor
- preventing a standing stone from being toppled
- breaking an iron-hunter network before it maps your tells
- stopping Fomorian spoilage before it reaches a hearth

You can win a battle and still lose a sanctuary. You can lose a battle and still win the season if the children sleep safely in a warded hall and the well remembers your name.

That is the central pressure of sacred geography:

The land is not backdrop. It is the board you are playing on.

BOOK 0 — CHAPTER 4

The Six Lineages of the Sídhe

The Sídhe call themselves a people, but they are not one shape. They are a web of bloodlines, oaths, places, and survival strategies, braided together across centuries. In the time before the Fading, the differences between lineages were often matters of ceremony and temperament: which songs were favored at feasts, which stones were used as witnesses, which routes were safest in winter, which customs were spoken first at the threshold.

Now those differences have sharpened into doctrines.

When a culture is under siege, it stops being casual about identity. Every lineage becomes a proposal for survival, and every proposal becomes an argument. The Moundborn whisper that secrecy is endurance. The Court-Sídhe insist that law is the spine of a people. The Hostborn say mobility is life. The Wellspring Sídhe murmur that memory must be preserved or nothing matters. The Hearthbound prove, day by day, that food and shelter are more sacred than pride. The Beastmarked snarl that the wild is the only sanctuary that cannot be nailed down.

None of them are wholly right. None of them can afford to be wholly wrong.

In this chapter, each lineage is presented as it exists **now**, in the era of encroaching human cultures, Fir Bolg bitterness, and Fomorian rot. Each section offers the lineage's common physical traits, cultural values, political position, relationships, and the kinds of protagonists most likely to rise from that bloodline.

Remember: in this setting's structure, the lineage is your character's "archetype." It grants identity and innate capability, but it does not dictate profession. A Moundborn may choose to become a warrior; a Hostborn may become a healer; a Court-Sídhe may live as a scout. The lineage describes how you were raised, what you were expected to be, and what your people assume you will do when the Fading reaches your doorstep.

Moundborn (Hill-Kin)

The Hidden Folk of the Hollow Hill

Common Physical Traits

If the Sídhe ever had a "common" look, it is the Moundborn—human-sized and quietly elegant, the kind of presence that can be mistaken for ordinary until your mind catches on what it cannot name.

Moundborn are often recognized by small, consistent wrongness:

- **Eyes that catch light too cleanly**, reflecting moonlight with an almost glassy precision. In dim interiors their eyes seem brighter than they should; in bright daylight they look oddly calm, as if sunlight is merely another kind of shadow.
- **Hair with a fineness that borders on unnatural**—even when it is dark and rough from travel, it tends to fall in deliberate lines, as if the air is gentler around it.
- **Skin that reads as luminous** rather than pale: a subtle impression of inner light, most noticeable near dusk or in firelight.

- **Features with a composed symmetry** that makes them feel "chosen" by the hill itself—cheekbones, brows, jawlines that seem carved rather than grown.
- A frequent "tell" even when they try to hide it: **a hawthorn-sweet scent**, the suggestion of distant music, or a slight cooling of the air in a tight room.

Their clothing tends to be layered and practical—cloaks, hoods, travel leathers, long shirts tied with cords instead of iron buckles. Even the plainest Moundborn garments often include careful details: knotwork cords, leaf-shaped pins, carved toggles, thin strips of silver thread. These are not merely decoration. They are **anchors**—small, portable truths that help glamour hold.

Cultural Identity: The Keepers of Seeming

Moundborn live where the world is thinnest: barrows, ringforts, cairns, and green hills that hold doorways beneath their grass. Their cultural philosophy begins with a simple observation: the waking world wins by making itself obvious. Roads, bells, laws, and iron are all declarations.

Moundborn answer declarations with **absence**.

This does not mean cowardice. It means strategy. It means that when the world comes to count you, you refuse to be counted. It means that a hunting party looks directly at your sanctuary and sees only a rise of land. It means that a road crew walks within a stone's throw of your hidden hall and remembers nothing unusual.

To Moundborn, glamour is not frivolity. It is an ethic:

- Do not waste wonder.
- Do not draw attention you cannot afford.
- Do not show your hand unless you must.
- When you must act, act with precision and vanish before consequence can anchor itself.

They are often accused of paranoia by other lineages. They are also often right.

Social Structure: Houses and Hillwardens

Moundborn society is less centralized than Court-Sídhe, more domestic than Hostborn, less mystical than Wellspring, and less instinct-driven than Beastmarked. They favor **kin-houses** tied to specific hills and sanctuaries, linked by old paths and webs of favors.

Their leadership roles tend to be functional:

- **Hillwardens** maintain the sanctuary's physical and spiritual integrity.
- **Tokenmakers** craft the pins, cords, and anchors that hold glamour steady.
- **Pathkeepers** maintain safe routes between hills and hearths.
- **Veilwrights** specialize in concealment, distraction, and misdirection.

Moundborn rarely declare a "king." Their authority is often informal: the elder who knows the most, the warden who has kept the hill safe through three seasons of iron raids, the veilwright whose work has saved children.

The Moundborn Stance on the Fading

Moundborn do not deny the Fading. They interpret it as **erasure**.

The waking world's pressure is not only physical. It is narrative. When the last human in a valley stops believing the hill is dangerous, the hill becomes easier to violate. When the old story is replaced by a new one, the old door becomes harder to find. When an ancient ringfort becomes a "ruin" rather than a boundary, something changes in the air.

So Moundborn do what they have always done: preserve the old stories by ensuring they remain **useful**.

They quietly cultivate superstition where it protects them. They let a village remain afraid of a grove, because fear is a fence that requires no iron. They spread harmless tales that discourage digging into certain mounds. They sabotage road crews by misdirection rather than slaughter, because slaughter invites reprisals that anchor conflict in the landscape.

They are not pacifists. They are simply careful about which violence is worth the cost.

Relationships

- **Court-Sídhe:** mutually necessary, mutually irritated. Moundborn often consider courts too visible; courts consider Moundborn too evasive.
- **Hostborn:** allied in practice. Moundborn hide; Hostborn move. Together, they keep people alive.
- **Wellspring:** deep respect. Memory needs secrecy, and secrecy needs omen.
- **Hearthbound:** indispensable. A hidden hall without a functioning hearth is a tomb with better furniture.
- **Beastmarked:** wary admiration. Beastmarked can guard territory in ways glamour cannot, but they attract conflict.

Notable Moundborn Figures and Sites

- **Niamh Bracken-Veil, Hillwarden of Grianmhar:** keeper of a sanctuary that is "invisible" from three directions and obvious from the fourth—because she believes secrecy should be chosen, not feared.
- **The Hall of Rowan Oaths:** a hidden barrow-hall where carved knots on pillars represent treaties, and some knots are cut—breaches that still bleed consequence into the present.
- **Brú na Bóinne:** the great barrow complex, rumored to contain linked halls that open only under certain skies, and perhaps a feast caught in perpetual beginning.

Protagonists from the Hill

Moundborn protagonists often begin as:

- couriers carrying tokens and names between sanctuaries
- scouts and spies among human roads
- guardians of a specific hill threatened by digging or roadwork
- glamourwrights who must decide how much wonder to risk

Their central dilemma is always the same: **how long can you survive by being unseen before your people become forgotten?**

Court-Sídhe (Bright and Twilight)

The Oath-Bound Nobility of the Old Order

Common Physical Traits

Court-Sídhe do not necessarily look "more beautiful" than other Sídhe—beauty is too subjective and too easily weaponized. But Court-Sídhe almost always look **intentional**.

- **Posture like a practiced weapon:** still, balanced, unreadable.
- **Faces that feel carved:** high cheekbones, clean jawlines, sharp brows, eyes that hold attention.
- **Voices with unnatural control:** calm cadence even in fear, as if breath itself obeys rank.
- An uncanny steadiness in the gaze: listeners often feel watched even when the Court-Sídhe looks away.
- Their common tell is auditory: **the faint suggestion of distant music**—a harp-string resonance or drumbeat—when they speak binding words.

They often display visible tokens of status: torcs, rings, woven sashes, cloaks lined with symbolic knotwork. These are not vanity. They are statements: *I am witnessed. I am bound. I have rights.*

Cultural Identity: The Living Law

Court-Sídhe society exists to preserve a truth other lineages sometimes forget: in a layered world, reality is not only physical. It is relational. If relationships collapse—between host and guest, between ruler and ruled, between ally and ally—then sanctuaries cannot remain stable.

Court-Sídhe believe that **law is not an obstacle to freedom but a container for survival**.

They are the keepers of:

- **Hospitality codes** (guest-right as shield and trap)
- **Oath terms** (clarity as sacred)
- **Witness practice** (stones, wells, hearths as observers)

- **Sanction** (naming breaches so rot does not spread)

In old tales, humans sometimes portray the Sídhe as capricious. Court-Sídhe insist the opposite: most "caprice" is simply consequence misunderstood by those who broke terms and refused to admit it.

Bright Court and Twilight Court

The distinction between Bright and Twilight is less a moral label than a survival debate.

- **Bright Court** insists on continuity: maintain ceremony, preserve dignity, refuse compromises that cheapen old law.
- **Twilight Court** insists on adaptation: bend without breaking, accept shadow-alliances, bargain with unpleasant partners if it buys time.

Both claim to protect the same core truth: the Sídhe must remain a people, not scattered fugitives. Their disagreement is over methods. In the time of the Fading, the argument grows sharper, because every compromise feels like a step toward disappearing.

The Court-Sídhe Stance on the Fading

To Court-Sídhe, the Fading is not merely physical pressure. It is **legal collapse**.

If humans no longer respect guest-right, then hospitality becomes a trap. If humans treat oaths as disposable, then bargains become pointless. If sanctified bells and written claims become the only recognized authority, then the Sídhe's living law loses its teeth.

Thus Court-Sídhe pursue politics relentlessly:

- treaties with human kings
- formal recognition of sanctuary boundaries
- alliances with Fir Bolg chieftains
- sanctions against oath-breakers to maintain fear of consequence
- hostage exchanges and marriage-bargains where possible

Court-Sídhe are sometimes accused of naïveté for believing humans can be bound. The Court-Sídhe reply: the alternative is open war, and open war favors those who can replace soldiers faster.

Relationships

- **Moundborn:** essential, frustrating. Courts need secrecy; secrecy resists formal terms.
- **Hostborn:** necessary muscle. Courts often rely on Hostborn for enforcement and escort, and fear they cannot fully control them.
- **Wellspring:** valuable witnesses. Water remembers, and courts need memory.
- **Hearthbound:** the real foundation. A court without hearths is a title without a body.
- **Beastmarked:** unpredictable allies. Beastmarked obey pacts and geisa, not always court etiquette.

Notable Court-Sídhe Figures and Sites

- **Ailbhe of the White Torc, Third Witness of Uisneach:** a herald whose identity is built from witness-law, feared for ruthless sanction, vital for negotiation.
- **The Stone Ring of Uisneach:** boundary-meeting place contested by human kings, clergy, and Sídhe courts alike.
- **The Court of Ashen Lanterns:** a Twilight gathering known for bargains that keep sanctuaries alive—at prices Bright Court refuses to pay.

Protagonists of the Court

Court-Sídhe protagonists often begin as:

- emissaries sent to bargain with a human lord
- sanctioners tasked with naming a breach without causing civil war
- hostage-keepers protecting (or manipulating) a prisoner exchange
- young nobles forced to decide whether dignity or survival matters more

Their central dilemma is the oldest political question: **how far can you bend a law before it is no longer law?**

Hostborn (Sluagh-Kin)

Riders of Wind, Pursuit, and the Hard Choice to Move

Common Physical Traits

Hostborn look like people raised under open sky rather than under carved ceilings.

- **Lean, long-limbed builds** built for endurance travel and sudden bursts of speed.
- Hair that never fully lies flat—often coarse like horse mane, stirred by invisible currents.
- Pale markings like frost on knuckles, cheekbones, and collarbones.
- Eyes that rarely stop scanning space, tracking motion instinctively.
- Their tell is atmospheric: the room feels subtly colder, thinner, as if air pressure changes.

They favor light gear: cloaks, leather, non-iron buckles, bone toggles, horn tools. Their aesthetics are functional, with occasional sharp ornament that resembles feathers or spear-points.

Cultural Identity: Motion as Survival

Hostborn are shaped by a brutal reality: sanctuaries can be found. Roads and laws make hiding harder. The safest place is often not a place at all—it is **movement**.

Hostborn culture values:

- competence and discipline
- listening to wind, birds, and terrain
- accepting retreat as a tactic rather than shame
- acting decisively when a threat must be cut out before it spreads

They are the lineage most associated with the **Fair Host**—the hunting force in old tales that rides the night sky. Hostborn do not all worship the Host, and some fear it, but they respect its logic: the hunt does not pause because prey wishes it.

This makes Hostborn feel morally sharp-edged compared to other lineages. They will do unpleasant things to keep people alive. They will sacrifice a building to save a flight of refugees. They will kill an iron-hunter if doing so prevents a sanctuary's location from being carried back to a lord.

They can be compassionate. They simply do not confuse compassion with softness.

The Hostborn Stance on the Fading

Hostborn treat the Fading like a battlefield map. They believe:

- fixed sanctuaries are valuable but vulnerable
- diplomacy buys time, but time must be used to prepare escape routes
- the enemy's infrastructure must be disrupted—roads, ironworks, informant networks
- Fomorian infestations must be hunted early

Thus Hostborn are often the first to propose raids:

- sabotage a bridge being built near a thin place
- burn a blacksmith's forge that supplies iron-hunters
- ambush a road crew before it anchors the king's reach
- escort refugees through Hollow Ways while the surface erupts in distraction

They often clash with Court-Sídhe over collateral. They often clash with Hearthbound over the risk to safehouses. They often clash with Wellspring over the danger of provoking storms in the land's memory.

Hostborn answer these concerns with a single hard truth: **if you do nothing, you still lose.**

Relationships

- **Moundborn:** excellent partners. Moundborn hide what Hostborn move.
- **Court-Sídhe:** tense. Courts want control; Hostborn want results.
- **Wellspring:** valued but sometimes frustrating; omens can be slow, while pursuit is immediate.

- **Hearthbound:** revered in private, but often put in danger by Hostborn actions.
- **Beastmarked:** kin in violence. Beastmarked understand hunting; Hostborn understand war.

Notable Hostborn Figures and Sites

- **Fiachra Gale-Spear, Huntleader of the Third Flight:** a strategist of motion who treats the island like a map of pressure lines.
- **The Hawk-Thread Path:** a Hollow Way along ridgelines, visible only to those who can read wind and bird flight; rumored to remember courage.
- **The Black Bell Ambush Site:** a place where Hostborn once destroyed a church bell convoy—now haunted by guilt and crows.

Protagonists of the Hunt

Hostborn protagonists often begin as:

- escorts for refugees and tokens
- scouts mapping iron-hunter networks
- raiders tasked with destroying a forge or road crew
- huntleaders torn between protecting sanctuaries and striking threats

Their central dilemma is the burden of leadership: **how many risks can you take before you become the very disaster you're trying to outrun?**

Wellspring Sídhe

Keepers of Water Memory, Mist, and Omen

Common Physical Traits

Wellspring Sídhe look like rain given a human shape.

- Hair that appears damp even when dry—dark, glossy, heavy.
- Skin with a cool cast; their hands can feel chilled.
- Eyes that mirror light like water—glints, ripples, unnatural depth.
- Freckles like spray or river-stones across cheekbones and shoulders.
- Their tell is sensory: the faint smell of fresh water, rain, or lake-weed; sometimes condensation beads on nearby surfaces.

They wear layered shawls, flowing cloaks, and garments chosen for movement through wet terrain. They carry bowls, mirrors, smooth stones, and small vials—not as trinkets, but as practical tools for omen and witness.

Cultural Identity: Memory as Weapon

Wellspring culture begins with an assertion: the land remembers. Not metaphorically—actively.

A well remembers who offered bread. A river remembers who bled at its ford. A lake remembers a face that stared into it and asked for power. Memory is not passive; it is an ecosystem of witness and consequence.

Thus Wellspring Sídhe value:

- reciprocity with spirits
- careful offering etiquette
- listening before acting
- emotional truth even when politics lies
- preservation of names and stories as anchors against the Fading

They are often the conscience of the Sídhe, and also their quiet manipulators. A Wellspring envoy may not command an army, but they can shape decisions with a single omen delivered at the right moment.

The Wellspring Stance on the Fading

Wellspring Sídhe fear the Fading as a form of **amnesia**.

If wells are capped, renamed, or polluted, then the island's memory becomes inaccessible. If human doctrine replaces old stories, then the witness network that supports Sídhe existence weakens. If Fomorian blight infects water, then memory becomes hostile and begins to lie.

Thus Wellspring Sídhe focus on:

- guarding sacred wells

- maintaining ford etiquette even among desperate refugees
- detecting blight early
- bargaining with water-spirits for concealment and safe passage
- preserving names and stories in sanctuaries where they can still be spoken safely

They often act as mediators between lineages, because water touches everything. Yet their patience can become paralysis when others demand immediate action.

Relationships

- **Moundborn:** aligned; secrecy and memory support each other.
- **Court-Sídhe:** essential; courts need witness, wells need law.
- **Hostborn:** tense; Hostborn move fast, Wellspring warn slow.
- **Hearthbound:** deeply allied; hearths need clean water and calm.
- **Beastmarked:** sometimes uneasy; Beastmarked instincts can violate water etiquette.

Notable Wellspring Figures and Sites

- **Siofra of Lough Glass, Water-Witness:** collector of names, guardian of memory, feared for knowing what people wish forgotten.
- **Tobar Glass (The Glass Well):** shows intent rather than face, known to refuse the dishonest.
- **Loch Scáth:** deep lake haunted by wrong reflections and the Grey Widow's bargains.

Protagonists of the Well

Wellspring protagonists often begin as:

- omen-readers tasked with guiding a sanctuary's survival decisions
- investigators of blight and corruption
- diplomats with spirits and human households that honor wells
- keepers of a well threatened by renaming, capping, or pollution

Their central dilemma is spiritual and strategic: **how do you preserve memory without becoming trapped by grief?**

Hearthbound (Lintel-Folk)

Ward-Crafters of Home, Rest, and Quiet Survival

Common Physical Traits

Hearthbound often appear sturdier and more "made for living" than other Sídhe.

- Shorter, broader builds are common—bodies shaped by work rather than ceremony.
- Callused hands even among scholars; they repair, craft, cook, ward.
- Eyes that glow like embers in low light—gold, copper, deep brown.
- Small marks that look like soot freckles, ash smudges that never fully wash away.
- Their tell is comforting and dangerous: the scent of woodsmoke, herbs, baked bread, even when no fire burns.

They dress practically—aprons, belts with tools, pouches of salt, rowan, thread. Their ornaments are functional: pins that double as ward anchors, cords knotted with meaning, carved toggles that bind doors without iron.

Cultural Identity: Hospitality as Infrastructure

Hearthbound understand something that war-leaders and nobles often forget: a people does not survive on victories alone. They survive on:

- sleep
- food
- clean water
- repaired gear
- safe births
- children who laugh sometimes

Hearthbound treat hospitality as a craft and a weapon. A well-run hearth can shelter refugees, conceal wounded warriors, and stabilize frightened minds. A warded lintel can keep a sanctuary from becoming a beacon to iron-hunters. A properly managed guest-right can bind dangerous outsiders more effectively than chains.

Their authority is rarely flashy. Yet in the time of the Fading, many courts survive because Hearthbound decide they will.

The Hearthbound Stance on the Fading

Hearthbound experience the Fading as **domestic attack**:

- nightmares in children
- spoiled stores
- iron nails in lintels
- raids on safehouses
- community fracture under fear

Thus Hearthbound focus on:

- creating and maintaining safehouses
- crafting ward tokens and threshold protections
- coordinating refuge networks
- keeping sanctuaries functional during winter
- preventing despair from turning hospitality into paranoia

They often clash with Hostborn, who endanger safehouses through raids. They often clash with Court-Sídhe, who demand political risks that could expose hearth networks. They often clash with Beastmarked, whose wild instincts can bring conflict to the doorstep.

Hearthbound respond with a simple line: **if the hearth dies, the people die.**

Relationships

- **Moundborn:** deeply allied; secrecy supports safehouses.
- **Court-Sídhe:** necessary; law protects hearth rights, but can also endanger them.
- **Hostborn:** complicated; Hostborn save people and also draw fire.
- **Wellspring:** constant partnership; water and hearth are linked.
- **Beastmarked:** unpredictable; sometimes the best guardians, sometimes the source of trouble.

Notable Hearthbound Figures and Sites

- **Rua Hearth-Thread, Matron of Nine Lintels:** practical leader who has outlived courts, terrifying in anger because her anger is organized.
- **The Nine-Lintel Refuge:** moving sanctuary network built on relocatable thresholds and disciplined hospitality.
- **The Weaver's House of Coill Rua:** surface sanctuary whose loom functions as a ward engine.

Protagonists of the Hearth

Hearthbound protagonists often begin as:

- ward-crafters protecting a safehouse network
- coordinators moving refugees through human territory
- healers and negotiators using hospitality as leverage
- curse-breakers dealing with domestic blight

Their central dilemma is sacrifice: **how many strangers can you shelter before your doors become a target?**

Beastmarked (Totem Lineages)

The Wild Blood of Pact, Instinct, and geis

Common Physical Traits

Beastmarked Sídhe carry visible echoes of totem influence. The specific shape depends on the totem line, but common patterns persist:

- Eyes with animal sharpness—wide pupils, reflective shine, predatory focus.
- Hair textures that suggest fur, feather sheen, mane thickness, or coarse bristle.

- Subtle morphological hints: pointed canines, stronger nails, heavier brows, long necks, shoulder builds that favor a particular gait.
- Markings that appear like stripes, spots, or claw-scar lines—sometimes only visible in certain light.
- Their tell is social: animals notice them immediately—either calming or bristling depending on mood and totem.

They favor gear suited to motion: leather, bone toggles, horn tools, corded straps. They avoid iron fastenings as much as possible and often prefer natural materials that "agree" with their pact.

Cultural Identity: Belonging to the Wild

Beastmarked do not merely live near wilderness. They identify with it. Their worldview says:

- land is not property; it is relationship
- prey is not taken; it is negotiated with through the hunt
- instinct is not shameful; it is truth
- taboos are not arbitrary; they are the shape of your pact

Beastmarked culture is organized around **totem lines**: cat-line, hound-line, stag-line, raven-line, boar-line, and others. Each line carries its own manners, favored prey, taboos, and social expectations.

They are often less formal than Court-Sídhe and less domestic than Hearthbound. They can be hard to live with—quick to anger, quick to laughter, quick to leave. But when the wild is threatened, Beastmarked become terrifyingly steadfast.

The Beastmarked Stance on the Fading

Beastmarked fear the Fading as the death of wilderness. Roads carve forests. Farms drain bogs. Iron traps and hounds reduce beasts. Human law turns hunting into property enforcement.

Thus Beastmarked respond with:

- defense of wild corridors
- sabotage of settlement expansion
- hunting of blight-creatures
- intimidation of human hunters who violate old etiquette
- alliances with Fir Bolg or Hostborn when necessary

Some Beastmarked believe the only viable future is to become more beast, less "court"—to vanish into the wild so completely that the waking world cannot map them.

Others reject this as surrender. Their arguments can become violent.

Relationships

- **Moundborn:** cautious respect; secrecy is useful, but Beastmarked dislike hiding forever.
- **Court-Sídhe:** frequent tension; Beastmarked obey pacts, not titles.
- **Hostborn:** kin in violence; both understand hunting, though their ethics differ.
- **Wellspring:** mutual dependence; water and wild are linked, but etiquette can clash.
- **Hearthbound:** sometimes strained; Beastmarked can bring trouble to hearths, but also protect them fiercely.

Notable Beastmarked Figures and Sites

- **Bran Antlered, Keeper of the Stag Crown Glade:** quiet guardian bound by a geis never to refuse defense of his ground.
- **The Stag Crown Glade:** wild sanctuary marked by antlered stones; disrespectful hunters lose their way until they collapse.
- **The Raven Ford:** a threshold crossing where Beastmarked Raven-lines claim the Morrígan's attention still lingers.

Protagonists of the Totem

Beastmarked protagonists often begin as:

- trackers hunting Fomorian blight-creatures
- guardians of a wild sanctuary corridor threatened by settlement
- scouts mediating between instinct and diplomacy

- outcasts struggling under a geis that conflicts with survival needs

Their central dilemma is identity: **how do you remain a person when your survival strategy demands you become a weapon?**

A Final Note: The Lineages as a Single People

It is easy, in the time of the Fading, for lineages to turn their differences into accusations. The Moundborn call the Hostborn reckless. The Hostborn call the Court-Sídhe naive. The Court-Sídhe call the Beastmarked undisciplined. The Beastmarked call the Hearthbound soft. The Hearthbound call everyone else foolish when winter comes. The Wellspring Sídhe watch, saddened, and whisper that all of it will be remembered.

Yet when iron-hunters come, the differences blur.

A sanctuary survives because:

- a Moundborn kept it hidden
- a Hearthbound kept it livable
- a Wellspring envoy warned of danger
- a Hostborn flight moved refugees
- a Court-Sídhe bound allies by oath
- a Beastmarked hunted the blight that would have ruined everything

This is the setting's heart: survival is communal, even when politics fractures. If the Protagonist is to keep the Sídhe real through another season, they will need allies—and those allies will not share one philosophy.

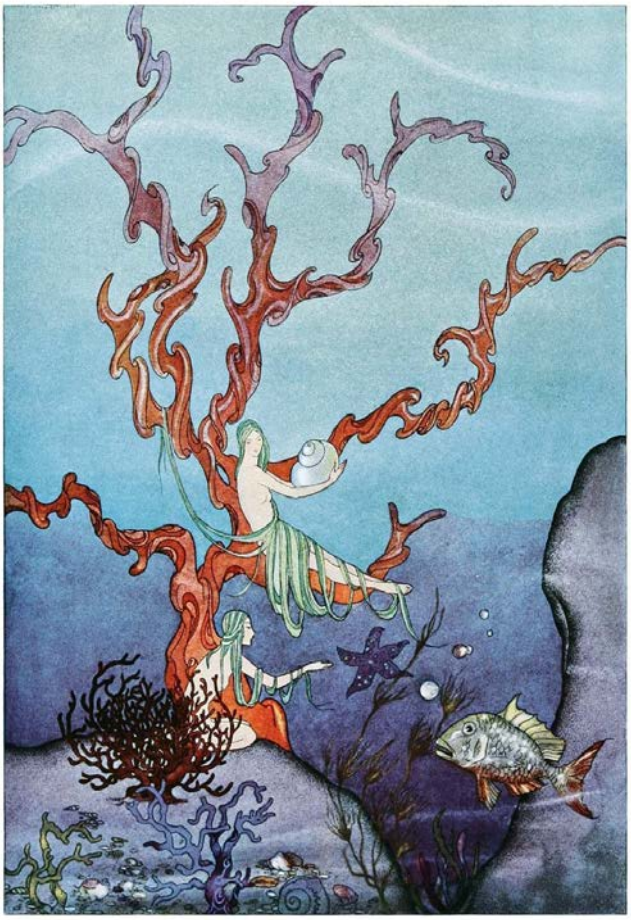
In the layered world, nothing survives alone.

BOOK 0 — CHAPTER 5

Sídhe Magick

Magick in Éire does not behave like a craft hammered into spells and formulas. It does not sit comfortably in a book. It does not ask to be named in neat lists. The Sídhe do not "cast" in the way a human story imagines a wizard casting—hands raised, syllables shouted, power hurled like a stone.

Sídhe magick is older, quieter, and more personal than that.



It is the art of **relationship** made practical.

A Sídhe does not command the world so much as **negotiate** with it—sometimes politely, sometimes ruthlessly. A Sídhe changes reality by shifting what things *mean*: who is allowed inside, what a threshold considers a boundary, what a witness remembers, what a name permits, what a beast is willing to become.

And because the world is layered, the changes are rarely simple. The island pushes back. Spirits have opinions. Oaths bind both ways. A well remembers, but it also judges. A barrow door opens, but it also counts the cost.

This is why Sídhe magick feels unlike the "wizardly" traditions of other fantasy tales. There are no common fireballs. No standardized shields. No universal spell lists passed from master to apprentice in clean columns. There are workings—specific acts of persuasion and pressure—rooted in etiquette, geography, memory, and taboo.

In the time of the Fading, this magick is both more precious and more dangerous than it has ever been, because the waking world has learned how to bruise it. Cold iron does not merely injure Sídhe bodies; it insults the layered world so harshly that delicate workings can unravel. Bells and written claims thicken boundaries. The constant hammering of certainty makes subtlety expensive.

Still, the Sídhe remain a people who can do what humans cannot.

They can ask a hill to hide them.
They can make a doorway forget it is a doorway.
They can speak a promise so tightly that fate develops a spine.
They can read grief in water.
They can borrow a hawk's eyes and run across rooftops like wind.
They can turn a hearth into a fortress without a wall.

To understand Sídhe magick, you must understand three truths: **Essence**, **Witness**, and **Cost**.

Essence — The Breath Behind All Workings

Every Sídhe has a reservoir of otherworld vitality: a presence that is not quite flesh and not quite spirit. The Sídhe call it by many courtesy names—**Essence**, **glamour-blood**, **hill-breath**, **well-light**—but the meaning is consistent:

Essence is the capacity to press the layered world into a new shape.

Some Sídhe are born with deep Essence and never learn why. Some cultivate it through discipline, courtesy, and the careful maintenance of relationships with sacred places. Some have only a thin pool, and those are often the ones who rely most heavily on tokens, sanctuaries, and the help of others.

In practical terms, Essence behaves like endurance for the soul. It can be spent. It can be replenished. It can be strained

by fear, injury, betrayal, and prolonged time too close to iron.

In setting terms, Essence is also identity. When a Sídhe loses too much Essence too often—when they are forced to live in a world that denies them—something begins to fade in their edges. They become less solid in reflections. Their name loses weight. Their old paths stop answering. This is not immediate death. It is the slow thinning that makes the Sídhe fear the future more than any blade.

Thus Essence is not merely "fuel." It is the currency of being.

How the Sídhe Restore Essence

The Sídhe do not restore Essence by "sleep alone" in the way humans imagine stamina. Rest helps—but Essence returns most strongly through acts that reinforce Sídhe reality:

- **Hospitality done properly**: host and guest honoring terms, sharing food, witnessing courtesy
- **Offerings at wells and thresholds**: not bribery, but acknowledgment of relationship
- **Time in sanctuaries**: hills, hearths, stone circles, sacred groves
- **Keeping and completing bargains**: finishing what was promised; naming breaches and making amends
- **Ritual acts of identity**: speaking true names in safe halls, renewing house tokens, repairing a damaged threshold
- **Seasonal feasts**: gatherings where the old songs are still sung without irony

The Fading harms Essence because it attacks these restoration points. When sanctuaries are compromised, when hospitality becomes risky, when wells are renamed, when fear prevents feasts, Essence becomes harder to regain—and magick grows more costly.

Witness — The Difference Between a Trick and a Law

A human might think magick is about willpower. A Sídhe knows magick is about **witness**.

A working performed in private is a trick. A working performed in the presence of witness becomes a law—at least for a while.

Witness can be:

- a person who hears the terms
- a hearth that warms the oath
- a stone that watches and remembers
- a well that holds the emotion of what was spoken
- the land itself, acknowledged by offering and courtesy

This is why Sídhe magick is so bound to place. The best glamour does not come from shouting louder; it comes from choosing the right light, the right threshold, the right witnesses. The strongest Oathcraft does not come from grand threats; it comes from clear terms, fair exchange, and a witness that cannot be bribed.

In the time of the Fading, witness is contested. The Church tries to replace old witnesses with new ones. Human law tries to replace spoken consequence with written claim. Iron-hunters try to make iron the only witness that matters: *here is the nail, therefore this is real.*

The Sídhe respond by clinging to older witnesses—because if witness dies, their world becomes flat.

Cost — The World Always Takes Something

Sídhe magick is not about "power without price." It is about choosing which price you can live with.

Sometimes the cost is Essence.
Sometimes the cost is attention—the dreaded Tell.
Sometimes the cost is obligation—an owed favor, a geis hook, a spirit's claim.
Sometimes the cost is sacrifice—time lost on a Hollow Way, a truth spoken you wanted hidden, a name exposed.

The Sídhe understand that the waking world is increasingly hostile to their workings. Thus many Sídhe prefer **quiet magicks**: the sorts that do not look like miracles from a distance, but change the course of events all the same.

A glamour that makes a road crew "forget" a hill exists can be more valuable than a storm of fire.
A ward that keeps children asleep through a Fomorian nightmare can be more heroic than any duel.
A bargain that forces a human lord to hesitate before hammering nails into a threshold can save a sanctuary without bloodshed.

This is Sídhe magick: subtle, relational, and ruthless in its own way.

The Schools of Sídhe Magick

In this setting, magick is understood as a handful of distinct **Schools**—ways of interacting with the layered world. In Book 1, each School becomes an individual **d100 Skill** and is fueled by **Essence** (with Essence derived from an attribute, as already established). Here, we describe what each School *is*, how it feels, what it can do, what it cannot do, and how it shapes those who rely on it.

These Schools are not "academic" in the human sense. You do not earn a diploma. You inherit a relationship or you learn a pattern of etiquette that reality recognizes.

Some Schools are more common in certain lineages, but none are exclusively "forbidden" except by culture and tradition. A Sídhe may learn what their lineage does not prefer—but it is harder, lonelier, and often politically complicated.

Glamour (The Art of Unnoticed Truth)

Appearance, attention, memory-skim, and the soft pressure of belief

Glamour is the most misunderstood School by humans because it resembles "illusion," yet it is not mere false imagery. Glamour is the shaping of **attention and assumption**.

A glamour does not always create a thing. Often it removes the mind's ability to care.

- A traveler looks at a mound and sees only a hill because their attention slides away.
- A soldier hears a sound and dismisses it as wind because the wind is a plausible witness.
- A farmer speaks to you and remembers the conversation but cannot remember your face clearly.
- A road crew walks past the hawthorn gate and cannot explain why they chose another route.

In other words, Glamour is the magick of **plausibility**. The more plausible the effect, the stronger it holds. Glamour hates absurdity. It also hates iron, because iron is blunt certainty.

Glamour practitioners often speak softly, dress carefully, and keep tokens that anchor their identity. They are wary of crowds, bright noon sunlight, and hostile scrutiny.

What Glamour does well

- disguise and seeming
- misdirection and distraction
- hiding places and doors from casual notice
- smoothing memory (not erasing entire lives, but blurring details)
- creating "tells" deliberately to mislead hunters

What Glamour cannot easily do

- create matter from nothing
- hold against prolonged physical examination
- deceive iron rituals designed specifically to reveal
- force a person to believe something violently contradictory to their instincts

The danger of Glamour
Rely on Glamour too long, and you begin to treat reality as negotiable in all matters. Glamourwrights can become detached, manipulative, and dangerously confident—until someone drives an iron nail into the story and the glamour shatters.

Oathcraft (The Spine of Words)

Bargains, geisa, hospitality, sanction, and the architecture of consequence

Oathcraft is the School that turns language into structure. It is not "mind control." It is the strengthening of **agreement** into an invisible framework that punishes bad faith.

Oathcraft is why Sídhe promises matter. It is why hospitality can be a shield. It is why some human families still whisper "be careful what you promise at the well."

When a Sídhe practices Oathcraft, they are not throwing energy. They are building a shape in the world: a boundary of behavior.

This School is feared because it has teeth without needing spectacle. A person who breaks guest-right may find their luck souring for reasons they cannot explain. A liar who swore terms may find their voice failing at the wrong moment. A treaty-breaker may find allies abandoning them, as if the world itself nudges betrayal toward consequence.

What Oathcraft does well

- establish guest-right in a space
- seal bargains to tokens and witnesses
- impose geisa (taboos that shape behavior)
- sense strain on sworn terms
- sanction breaches so consequences "stick"

What Oathcraft cannot easily do

- bind someone who never agreed and never accepted the terms
- replace physical force in open battle
- function cleanly without witnesses or exchange
- remain stable in environments saturated with iron hostility

The danger of Oathcraft
Oathcrafters can become rigid. They may value the law more than mercy. They may treat people as contracts. In the time of the Fading, some Oathcrafters grow desperate and attempt to bind humans who never truly consented—creating ugly, unstable bargains that rot and rebound.

Hollow Ways (The Path Beneath the Path)

Travel, thresholds, time-skew, door-finding, and the secret circulation of the island

Hollow Ways magick is not teleportation as a wizard imagines it. It is navigation of the layered world's seams.

A Hollow Way is a route that exists only because it is permitted: by place, by etiquette, by omen, by token, by timing. You do not "force" a Hollow Way; you **find** it, you **approach** it correctly, and you **leave** it without insulting it.

This School is the reason Sídhe sanctuaries can survive raids that should have trapped them. It is how refugees move. It is how a barrow door opens from the wrong side. It is how a mist path can lead from one well to another without crossing the fields between.

In the time of the Fading, Hollow Ways are both lifeline and risk. Human roads and bells disrupt old seams. Ironworks thicken boundaries. Fomorians infest thin places, turning routes into traps.

What Hollow Ways does well

- find thin places and hidden routes
- cross thresholds safely
- shorten travel by using layered seams
- avoid pursuit by "turning" onto routes hunters cannot see
- return from dangerous places without losing the self

What Hollow Ways cannot easily do

- deliver you anywhere at any time
- ignore the rules of threshold etiquette
- guarantee safe return if you travel in bad faith or panic
- remain stable when a sacred route is physically destroyed

The danger of Hollow Ways
This School tempts people to treat escape as a solution to everything. But escape is not victory. Overuse of Hollow Ways can fracture community—people vanish into routes and stop returning. It can also steal time. A refugee run that should take a night might cost a season. Worse: the path

may bring you back "mostly" yourself, but with a missing memory, a borrowed impulse, a name slightly out of place.

Hearthward (The Quiet Fortress)

Wards, sanctuaries, sleep, protection, and the domestic magick that keeps a people alive

Hearthward is the School most often dismissed by outsiders as "small magic." The Sídhe know better. In the era of the Fading, Hearthward may be the most important School of all.

A Hearthward does not conjure a shield of force. It makes a home behave like a home should: safe, warm, private, stable. It makes thresholds remember who belongs and who does not. It keeps nightmares from crawling into children's sleep. It muffles sound. It hides light. It turns a simple cottage into a refuge that cannot be casually found or violated.

Hearthward is not grand. It is relentless. It is how sanctuaries remain livable when the world is hungry.

What Hearthward does well

- ward thresholds against intrusion and scrying
- create quiet spaces for rest and recovery
- craft protective charms and tokens
- break minor household hexes
- stabilize sanctuaries against fear and despair

What Hearthward cannot easily do

- protect a place that refuses hospitality (bad faith breaks the hearth)
- function in a space saturated with iron nails and chains
- win battles alone without allies
- travel as easily as other Schools (it is tied to "inside")

The danger of Hearthward
Hearthward can become obsession. A hearthkeeper may lock doors and let others die outside to keep the inside safe. In the time of the Fading, that instinct is understandable—and catastrophic for a people who survive through networks.

Well & Mirror (The Memory of Water)

Omen, reflection, spirit parley, mist, and the emotional archive of the land

Well & Mirror magick treats water as witness and archive. It is not about "divination" in the wizard sense of peering into the future like a chart. It is about reading what the land already knows—its memories, its emotional residues, its warnings.

A Wellspring practitioner does not summon lightning. They listen to a well until it answers. They read the way mist moves across a ford. They look into a reflection and see intent rather than face. They bargain with a river spirit for safe passage. They drown a trail by persuading water and vapor to obscure signs.

Well & Mirror is subtle, and its power is often underestimated until it is too late. A single omen delivered at the right time can avert a war—or trigger one.

What Well & Mirror does well

- read emotional residues in places and objects
- scry by reflection and token
- call mist for concealment
- negotiate with water and fog spirits
- detect blight and corruption early (water tastes lies)

What Well & Mirror cannot easily do

- answer questions that no witness has observed
- function cleanly in polluted or desecrated water
- provide certainty (omens are warnings, not commandments)
- protect against iron that has been ritually set as a counter-witness

The danger of Well & Mirror
This School can drown its practitioners in grief. When you listen to water memory, you hear everything: betrayals, deaths, old wars, the slow suffering of the land. Some Wellspring Sídhe become paralyzed by sorrow. Others become cold manipulators who treat emotions like tools—

because they have learned that feelings are the deepest anchors.

Beastpact (The Borrowed Skin)

Totem pacts, animal-shape, senses, and the old agreement with the wild

This is the School that enables **shapechanging**, but not as a casual "spell." Beastpact is a relationship with instinct and totem. It is consent and surrender intertwined.

When a Sídhe changes shape through Beastpact, they do not merely "turn into an animal." They borrow a skin that the world recognizes as real because the pact is real. The change carries consequences: the animal's senses, impulses, and hungers bleed into the mind. A Beastpact practitioner must remember who they are while the body insists on different truths.

Beastpact is not universal shapeshifting. It is usually tied to a totem line—hound, cat, stag, raven, boar, hawk, and other old forms. Some Sídhe can only partially shift—claws, eyes, scent, speed. Full animal-shape is deeper and more dangerous.

What Beastpact does well

- borrow heightened senses
- command or soothe beasts through pact language
- partial shifting for claws, speed, endurance, or stealth
- full animal form for travel, infiltration, survival
- hunt blight-creatures by scent and omen

What Beastpact cannot easily do

- ignore the animal's instincts entirely
- take a form that the pact does not permit
- function cleanly when iron is close (iron is an insult to living pact)
- remain "civilized" if used repeatedly without rest and hearth anchoring

The danger of Beastpact
Lose yourself in the skin, and you return wrong. Not always visibly wrong. Sometimes it is subtle: a tendency to bite when angry, an inability to sleep indoors, a hunger that was not yours before. Beastpact practitioners often carry geisa not as punishment, but as safeguards—rules that keep the human-shaped self anchored.

Common Fae Magick (The Small Arts Everyone Learns)

Cantrips, sensing, token-work, unraveling minor glamour—original, practical, and humble

The Sídhe have a collection of small workings that do not belong to a single lineage. These are the "common arts" that a clever Sídhe can learn in the way a human learns knots and weather sense.

They are not flashy. They are what keeps people alive when Essence is low and danger is close.

Common Fae Magick includes:

- sensing active wards and unnatural pressure in a place
- small glamour nudges (a flicker, a whisper of misdirection, a "look away")
- token charms for luck or protection (temporary, limited)
- unraveling minor glamour or hexwork
- channeling through a simple focus like a pin, cord, bowl, or carved stone

These workings are often the only magick a Sídhe refugee has time to practice while on the run. They are also the workings humans most often encounter and misunderstand —leading to tales of "fairy lights," "bewitched milk," and "cursed thresholds."

The danger of the small arts
The small arts are easy to abuse. A Sídhe who uses minor glamour to manipulate humans constantly becomes careless, and careless magick leaves tells. Tells lead iron-hunters to hearths. A small sin can kill a sanctuary.

Why Sídhe Magick Looks Like This

The waking world is obsessed with spectacle because spectacle proves power.

The Sídhe do not need spectacle to know they are powerful. They need survival.

Their magick evolved in a landscape of witnesses and taboos, where the most important question was never "how much damage can I do?" but "how do I keep my people real?"

- Glamour keeps sanctuaries unseen.
- Oathcraft keeps allies bound and betrayal costly.
- Hollow Ways keep refugees moving and doors usable.
- Hearthward keeps the inside safe enough for children to sleep.
- Well & Mirror keeps memory intact and warns of blight.
- Beastpact keeps scouts alive and hunters dangerous.
- Common arts keep everyone from drowning when resources are thin.

In this setting, a "magical victory" is rarely a battlefield miracle. It is a night where the iron-hunters pass by without noticing the hawthorn gate. It is a treaty spoken at a stone ring that holds long enough for a sanctuary to relocate. It is a well that remains unspoiled through winter. It is a child who keeps their true name safe.

The Magick Wars of the Present

As the Fading advances, the waking world does not merely attack Sídhe bodies. It attacks Sídhe Schools directly:

- **Iron-hunters** develop countermeasures to Glamour (dogs, salt, iron nails placed as counter-witness).
- **Clergy** rename wells and sanctify thresholds, replacing witness networks.
- **Kings** build roads that cut through thin places, disrupting Hollow Ways.
- **Fomorians** corrupt water and dream, turning Well & Mirror into a battlefield.
- **Fir Bolg clans** contest standing stones and ancient rights, complicating Oathcraft politics.
- **Despair** pushes hearthkeepers to lock doors, weakening sanctuary networks.

Thus Sídhe magick becomes not only a tool but an identity. A Sídhe who specializes in a School becomes a strategic asset—protected, envied, and targeted.

Echoes of the Great Names

Even if the old figures are treated as myth, their echoes shape magick in the present.

- **Brigid's warmth** still seems to cling to certain hearthstones; Hearthward practitioners speak her courtesy name before lighting sanctuary fires.
- **Lugh's courage** is invoked by Hostborn before taking the Hawk-Thread Path; Hollow Ways sometimes "answer" better when fear is mastered.
- **The Dagda's feast-law** is remembered by Court-Sídhe when declaring guest-right; some sanctuaries claim his laughter still strengthens bargains.
- **The Morrígan's omen** is whispered by Wellspring and Beastmarked raven-lines at battlefields and fords; sometimes crows gather as if on command.

Whether these are gods, ancestors, or the land's deep memory is up to the table. In the time of the Fading, belief itself is a resource, and the Sídhe cannot afford to waste old names that still hold weight.

The Promise of Book 1

This chapter establishes how magick *feels* and *works in the fiction*. In Book 1, each School becomes a clear One-on-One-compatible mechanical entry:

- A dedicated **d100 Skill** per School
- **Essence costs** for non-innate workings (spent on attempt, success or failure)
- Clear "working menus" that remain non-wizardly and rooted in relationship, witness, and place
- Harmful workings expressed as weapon-like attacks only when appropriate, costly and rare

But the heart will not change:

Sídhe magick is the art of staying real in a world that wants you to become a story.

BOOK 0 — CHAPTER 6

Sídhe Life: Seasons, Feasts, and the Politics of Survival

The Sídhe do not live in a "medieval fantasy world" the way humans tell stories. They live in **Éire**, a land that breathes in layered cycles—light and dark, growth and rot, hospitality and hunger. Their lives are governed less by calendars and more by thresholds: the moment the first frost bites a ditch, the first hawthorn blossoms, the first heavy rain that turns a path into a river, the first bell that rings from a new stone building in a valley that used to be quiet.

Humans often believe the Sídhe are timeless because they appear and vanish like weather. This is a misunderstanding born of ignorance. The Sídhe are not timeless; they are **seasoned**. They have learned to live by the island's cycles more strictly than most humans ever have, because their survival depends on noticing when the world shifts.

In the era of the Fading, that seasonal wisdom becomes sharper and more painful. The Sídhe can no longer assume that next year will resemble last year. A sanctuary that held for centuries may fail in one season if the wrong road is cut, if the wrong well is capped, if the wrong priest decides to name a stone. A feast that once gathered three courts might now be a risky whisper of a meeting—because too many refugees, too many iron-hunters, too many informants, and too little certainty.

And yet the Sídhe still feast.

They still gather.

They still make promises, trade tokens, tell stories, raise children, bury the dead, laugh at the right songs, and argue until someone storms out into the rain.

Because a people that stops doing these things has already started to die.

This chapter describes what Sídhe life looks like between raids and bargains—how the seasons shape movement and mood, how feasts function as politics and spiritual medicine, and how survival itself becomes a web of obligations that can save or ruin you.

The Sídhe Sense of Time

Humans mark time by kings, wars, and harvests. The Sídhe mark time by **place-health** and **threshold behavior**.

A Sídhe knows a season is turning not only because leaves change, but because:

- the Hollow Ways begin to "lean" toward different routes
- wells taste brighter or duller
- certain standing stones feel more awake at dusk
- hearthsmoke clings heavier to roof-beams
- animals behave as if something unseen has shifted

This sensitivity is not mystical flourish. It is habit built from necessity. In the layered world, small changes are warnings. A sanctuary rarely falls without giving signs first; the tragedy is that those signs can be subtle, and fear makes people ignore what they don't want to know.

The Fading's Effect on Time

The Fading makes time feel *unreliable* in two ways:

1. **Routes and rhythms become unstable.**
   A Hollow Way that opened reliably at the first fog of autumn might not open at all this year, because a human road now cuts across the seam. A standing stone that used to "witness" without hesitation may feel sullen if it has been carved with new symbols. A well that once answered quickly may go silent if offerings are interrupted.
2. **Politics accelerates.**
   Humans can build a church in a season. They can raise a palisade in weeks. They can move a boundary stone and make a legal claim overnight. Sídhe culture evolved in a world where change was slower. Now the Sídhe must react to human speed—without losing the patience that makes their magick stable.

Time becomes pressure. Pressure becomes politics.

The Seasonal Cycle of Sídhe Life

The Sídhe do not "hibernate" in winter or blossom only in summer. They remain active year-round, but the focus of life shifts with the seasons in ways that shape both daily behavior and major political decisions.

Spring: The Opening of Doors

Spring is the season of **repair and reawakening**. It is when sanctuaries check their boundaries, when hearths are cleaned, when tokens are renewed, when old paths are walked to ensure they still exist.

Spring is also when the waking world becomes most dangerous, because humans expand aggressively when weather improves. A lord who couldn't move troops in winter now sends men to mark land. A monastery sends workers to repair walls. A road crew begins cutting timber.

Thus spring creates a contradiction: the Sídhe feel their own world opening… while the waking world presses in.

Spring labors include:

- inspecting thresholds and repairing wards
- renewing guest-right agreements between sanctuaries
- testing Hollow Ways for stability
- reestablishing offerings at wells and fords
- sending scouts to watch human boundary activity
- arranging marriages, fosterings, and hostage exchanges

Common spring conflicts:

- a human road crew approaches a thin place
- Fir Bolg claim a ringfort "for the season"
- a Fomorian blight stirs in wetland meltwater
- a sanctuary's winter damage makes it vulnerable

Spring politics favors the Moundborn and Hearthbound: concealment and stability are necessary. But Hostborn flights also become active, because spring is when preemptive strikes can prevent a summer of settlement.

Summer: The Loud World

Summer is the season of **visibility**. Nights are shorter. Travel is easier. Human activity spreads like fire. Markets are busy. Raids are frequent. Coastal movements intensify. The Church's influence is more public.

For the Sídhe, summer is both opportunity and hazard. It is easier to move refugees because weather is forgiving. It is easier to hold gatherings because routes are open. It is also easier to be found, because the world is crowded and attention is sharp.

Summer encourages the Sídhe to rely on networks rather than isolation. A lone sanctuary in summer is a target. A network of safehouses and flights can absorb pressure.

Summer labors include:

- escorting refugees and relocating vulnerable hearths
- negotiating with human households for secrecy or aid
- sabotaging ironworks before they produce winter supply
- monitoring wells for pollution and renaming attempts
- dealing with raids and retaliations (human and Fomorian)

- training young Sídhe in practical survival courtesies

Common summer conflicts:

- iron-hunters sweep a region after a rumor
- raiders steal a token that anchors a sanctuary
- a human king declares new land claims loudly
- a Fomorian strain attempts to bribe human forces

Summer politics favors Hostborn and Court-Sídhe: movement and negotiation. It is also when Wellspring Sídhe become crucial, because summer is when water memory gets disturbed by crowds, pollution, and violence.

Autumn: The Counting Season

Autumn is the season of **accounting**. Harvest brings surplus and also scarcity pressure—humans count grain, count cattle, count obligations. This is when tribute demands become urgent and raids become strategic. Winter is coming, and everyone makes decisions they can justify in harsh weather.

For the Sídhe, autumn is when feasts carry the most weight. A feast in autumn is not merely celebration—it is logistics. Who will shelter whom? Which sanctuaries can support refugees through winter? Which courts will risk alliances? Who will be abandoned?

Autumn is also the season when oaths are most tested. Hunger makes betrayal tempting. Fear makes hospitality risky. Old grudges flare because winter will trap people together.

Autumn labors include:

- distributing stores among hearths
- negotiating winter refuge routes
- formalizing agreements and enforcing debts
- holding major feasts and court gatherings
- scouting winter threat lines (iron-hunters stockpiling)
- addressing breaches before they rot through winter

Common autumn conflicts:

- a sanctuary refuses refugees to preserve its own stores
- a Court-Sídhe demands a bargain that others see as surrender
- a Fir Bolg clan takes cattle "as rightful tribute"
- a Fomorian curse targets food stores and sleep

Autumn politics favors Court-Sídhe and Hearthbound: law and domestic survival become the core of strategy. Oathcraft and Hearthward practitioners become disproportionately influential because they determine who gets shelter and on what terms.

Winter: The Hidden War

Winter is the season of **quiet brutality**. The waking world slows, but it does not stop. Iron-hunters become more dangerous because winter makes rumor and fear sharper. Hunger makes communities savage. A single accusation can turn a village into a mob.

For the Sídhe, winter is when sanctuaries are both safest and most fragile. It is easier to stay hidden when travel is difficult. It is also harder to recover if discovered, because escape routes are limited and resources thin.

Winter is when the Sídhe learn what their culture truly is. If hospitality fails in winter, the people fracture. If hearths fail, children die. If oaths break, alliances collapse. If Hollow Ways fail, refugees become trapped.

Winter is also when the Sídhe become most mythlike to humans—appearing in storms, in snowlight, in sudden silences. This is not because winter makes them magical. It is because winter makes the human world less loud, and the layered world becomes easier to hear.

Winter labors include:

- maintaining hearth sanctity and preventing despair
- protecting wells from freezing damage or contamination
- keeping watch for Fomorian infiltration in dreams
- enforcing guest-right terms tightly
- tending the wounded and preserving morale
- conducting secret movements under storms when necessary

Common winter conflicts:

- a sanctuary becomes compromised and cannot relocate
- a guest breaks hospitality and brings iron into the hall
- nightmares spread through a refuge, hinting at Fomorian rot
- a human lord launches a winter "cleansing" campaign for prestige

Winter politics favors Hearthbound and Wellspring Sídhe: whoever controls rest and memory controls survival. It also favors Moundborn, because winter concealment is more reliable—until a desperate human decides to dig anyway, searching for imagined treasure to survive famine.

Feasts: More Than Celebration

Humans may imagine a Sídhe feast as indulgence—wine, music, beauty, seduction, and strange dancing under moonlight. Those things exist, sometimes. But the deeper truth is simpler:

A feast is where the Sídhe stay real.

Feasts perform functions that other cultures might assign to temples, parliaments, courts, and marketplaces.

Feasts as Spiritual Maintenance

Sídhe Essence is replenished by the reinforcement of relationship. A feast is relationship made visible.

At a proper feast:

- hospitality is practiced
- guest-right is declared and respected
- names are spoken correctly in safe company
- stories are told without mockery
- tokens are exchanged
- witnesses are present (hearth, stone, water)

This is why feasts are dangerous in the time of the Fading. They are also necessary. A people that stops gathering loses more than morale—it loses the restoration points that keep Essence from thinning.

Feasts as Politics

A Sídhe feast is where decisions happen:

- alliances negotiated
- sanctions declared
- debts counted
- refugees assigned
- routes shared or withheld
- marriages arranged
- rivalries inflamed or cooled

Feast politics is subtle. A seat placement can be an insult. The order of toasts can be a declaration. A song choice can be propaganda. A gifted token can be a trap.

Court-Sídhe usually take the lead in formal feast structure, but Hearthbound are the real architects: they decide what food is served, who is fed first, what thresholds are declared safe, whether guests are genuinely welcome or merely tolerated.

Feasts as Intelligence Networks

In a fragmented culture, news travels through gatherings.

Feasts are where:

- Hostborn bring reports of human road crews and ironworks
- Wellspring envoys share omens about blight and betrayal
- Moundborn reveal which sanctuaries have become unsafe
- Beastmarked report shifts in animal behavior and wild corridors
- Court-Sídhe formalize what everyone already knows into agreements

Some feasts are deliberately staged as distractions, drawing attention to one place while refugees move elsewhere. Some feasts are intentionally small, designed to reduce tells.

Feasts as Recruitment and Training

Young Sídhe are taught at feasts. Not through lectures, but through experience.

A child learns:

- how to speak courtesy at a threshold
- how to recognize a dangerous question
- when to give a courtesy name and when to stay silent
- how to read mood shifts in a hall
- how to interpret the presence of witnesses

A young protagonist may begin their story at a feast that becomes compromised—a perfect way to launch a One-on-One campaign: the night where everything that should have been safe becomes dangerous.

The Politics of Survival: How Sídhe Decisions Are Made

In stable times, Sídhe politics could afford ceremony. In the time of the Fading, politics becomes triage.

Most major Sídhe decisions revolve around three questions:

1. **Where do we anchor?**
   Which sanctuaries do we defend? Which do we abandon? Which do we move? Which do we hide deeper?
2. **Who do we bind?**
   Which humans can be bargained with? Which Fir Bolg clans can be allied with? Which lineages can be trusted? Which debts must be enforced?
3. **What do we sacrifice?**
   Do we sacrifice secrecy to save refugees? Do we sacrifice a hill to prevent war? Do we sacrifice a court's dignity to keep a well safe? Do we sacrifice a hostile human lord to prevent a larger campaign?

These questions produce predictable political factions even within each lineage.

The "Vanishers"

Vanishers believe survival requires deeper secrecy and fewer interactions with the waking world. They favor:

- Moundborn strategies
- small sanctuaries
- minimal bargains
- strict control of tells

They are often correct in the short term. They are often accused—sometimes fairly—of abandoning others to protect themselves.

The "Binders"

Binders believe survival requires alliances and enforceable agreements. They favor:

- Court-Sídhe strategies
- treaties with human kings or sympathetic households
- formal sanctioning to maintain consequence fear
- building coalitions against iron-hunters and Fomorians

They risk becoming compromised, manipulated, or forced into humiliating concessions.

The "Strikers"

Strikers believe survival requires active disruption of human expansion and early hunting of corruption. They favor:

- Hostborn raids
- Beastmarked territorial defense
- sabotage of ironworks and roads
- targeted assassinations of iron-hunter leaders

They keep pressure off sanctuaries. They also provoke reprisals that can burn safehouse networks if not managed carefully.

The "Keepers"

Keepers believe survival requires domestic stability and cultural continuity. They favor:

- Hearthbound networks
- Wellspring memory preservation
- protecting children and teaching courtesies
- maintaining feasts even in danger

They are sometimes accused of softness. In truth, they are fighting a different war: the war against cultural collapse.

Most Sídhe are a blend of these instincts. The tragedy and drama of the setting comes from moments when one instinct demands sacrifice of another.

How Each Lineage Lives Day to Day

The lineages differ not only in strategy but in daily life—the mundane rituals that shape personality.

Moundborn Daily Life

Moundborn homes are quiet and organized. Their day is full of:

- checking concealment points
- maintaining tokens and cords
- rehearsing routes and "cover stories"
- practicing subtle courtesy phrases meant for outsiders
- repairing non-iron fastenings and hidden doors

Their children are taught to be careful early—sometimes too early. A Moundborn child learns not to shout their true name the way other children might.

Court-Sídhe Daily Life

Court-Sídhe homes have structure. Even small courts maintain:

- formal greetings
- witness objects (stones, hearth markers, water bowls)
- scheduled councils
- careful record-keeping (often memory-based rather than written)

Court children are raised to speak precisely and to understand that careless words can be violence.

Hostborn Daily Life

Hostborn live like people who may have to leave tonight.

- gear is packed and ready
- routes are checked
- scouts train constantly
- meals are functional
- humor is sharp and often dark

Hostborn children learn movement—how to run, climb, read wind, and vanish.

Wellspring Daily Life

Wellspring life is rhythmic and reflective:

- daily offerings at water
- careful listening for omen
- maintaining mirrors and bowls
- speaking with spirits like neighbors
- keeping memory stories alive

Their children learn patience—sometimes at the cost of urgency.

Hearthbound Daily Life

Hearthbound life is work and protection:

- cooking, storing, and rationing
- crafting charms
- cleaning and repairing thresholds
- checking for subtle signs of hex and despair
- mediating conflicts before they poison the hall

Hearthbound children learn responsibility young, but they also learn comfort: Hearthbound believe a child must know warmth or they will grow into a weapon with no reason to stop.

Beastmarked Daily Life

Beastmarked live with instinct close:

- time in wild corridors
- hunting and tracking
- listening to animal behavior

- renewing pacts
- managing taboos and geisa

Their children learn to respect hunger and not be ruled by it—a difficult lesson, often learned through mistakes.

Notable Seasonal Gatherings and Feasts

Certain gatherings recur in Sídhe memory, even if they cannot always be held openly now.

The Last Bright Feast (Summer's Peak)

A gathering where courts try to remember what dignity felt like. In the present era it is often smaller, more guarded, and tinged with grief—because everyone knows this might be the last time they see certain faces.

Associated figure: Ailbhe of the White Torc often presides as witness, insisting that if dignity is lost, the people lose themselves.

The Counting Feast (Autumn's Edge)

A harsh feast where stores and refuge decisions are made. People leave with assignments: who shelters whom, who moves, who raids, who bargains.

Associated figure: Rua Hearth-Thread is rumored to have saved dozens by bluntly overruling noble pride at a Counting Feast.

The Quiet Hall (Winter's Deep)

Not always a feast—sometimes simply a gathering in silence where true names are spoken safely and the dead are remembered without telling humans.

Associated figure: Siofra of Lough Glass keeps record of who was present and who was missing—memory as accountability.

The Hunt Muster (Spring's First Wind)

A Hostborn-led assembly where routes are tested and threat lines are mapped. Alliances are made quickly, sometimes violently.

Associated figure: Fiachra Gale-Spear is known to challenge complacent leaders publicly at this muster.

The Protagonist's Place in All This

In One-on-One play, the Protagonist's life intersects with these cycles in intimate ways. Your character may be:

- a young Sídhe raised for a role they no longer want
- a courier carrying a token that could save a sanctuary
- an oathbound envoy who must negotiate with a human lord without being trapped
- a hearthkeeper forced to decide whether to shelter strangers
- a scout who discovers a Hollow Way has gone wrong
- a Beastmarked hunter whose geis conflicts with survival needs
- a Wellspring listener who hears a well's warning too late

The politics of survival are not abstract. They are personal. They are experienced through:

- who gets fed first
- who is allowed inside
- whose name is spoken
- whose promise is trusted
- which sanctuary is abandoned
- which road is broken
- which enemy is spared
- which ally is betrayed

A campaign in this setting is built from those decisions, repeated through seasons, growing heavier each time.

Because the island keeps turning.

And the Fading does not stop because you are tired.

A Closing Truth: Survival Is a Story You Keep Telling

Humans imagine survival is blood and steel. The Sídhe know survival is also narrative.

A people survives by continuing to act like a people:

- gathering
- offering
- honoring terms
- teaching children
- remembering the dead
- maintaining sanctuaries
- sharing food
- laughing sometimes, even when it hurts

When the Sídhe stop doing these things, the Fading accelerates—not because the universe punishes them, but because they have surrendered the relationships that make their world layered.

Thus the politics of survival are not only strategy. They are culture.

And culture is the one thing iron cannot hammer into place unless you let it.

BOOK 0 — CHAPTER 7

Tools of the Sídhe

A human thinks of tools as objects: a hammer, a knife, a shovel, a key. The Sídhe think of tools as **agreements made physical**.

A pin is not merely a pin. It is a promise that holds a cloak in place and a glamour in shape. A cord is not merely cord. It is a boundary that remembers who is allowed across it. A bowl is not merely a bowl. It is a witness that has learned the face of the one who carried it. A blade is not merely a blade. It is a declaration of intent made without iron—an insistence that the Sídhe can still defend themselves without accepting the waking world's harshest material.

In the era of the Fading, Sídhe tools have become more than tradition. They are survival infrastructure. They keep sanctuaries hidden, make travel possible, preserve memory, and reduce the cost of magick by anchoring it in craft.

This chapter presents the material culture of the Sídhe—what they carry, how they build and repair, and the kinds of objects that become precious when your enemies can destroy you simply by naming you loudly enough. It also introduces the characteristic tools of the Fir Bolg remnants and the Fomorian strains, because an item is never neutral in this setting. Objects have histories. Objects have alliances. Objects remember which hands they were made for.

The Sídhe Material World: Living Without Iron

The Cold Iron Bane is not a poetic superstition. It is the first design constraint of Sídhe civilization.

Where humans nail, the Sídhe bind.
Where humans forge, the Sídhe carve, weave, rivet, and knot.
Where humans build permanence, the Sídhe build **adaptability**.

Sídhe craftsmanship is therefore defined by:

- **Non-iron fastenings:** cords, toggles, bone pins, bronze rivets, wooden pegs
- **Portable architecture:** folding screens, removable lintels, movable hearthstones
- **Multi-use items:** travel kits that function as gear and as ward anchors
- **Quiet beauty:** ornament is rarely separate from function; patterns serve as memory keys and sympathetic anchors

This has two consequences that shape the tone of the setting:

1. Sídhe tools tend to look *intentional* even when humble. A carved toggle is not just pretty; it is made so that it will not fail at the wrong moment. A knot is not just decorative; it is a shape that holds meaning and can be read by those who know.
2. Sídhe tools are often **personal**. Because a tool can anchor a working, it becomes bound to its carrier—through habit, touch, and witness. This makes theft, loss, and inheritance emotionally heavy.

Common Sídhe Tool Categories

These categories appear across all six lineages. Individual lineages prefer certain tools and styles, but most Sídhe sanctuaries and travelers maintain at least a few of each.

Tokens (The Small Anchors)

A token is any small object deliberately prepared to "hold" a relationship: a promise, a place, a person, a courtesy, or a ward.

Tokens are not always magickal in the obvious sense. They are often **identity maintenance**—portable proof that the Sídhe and their rules still exist.

Common tokens include:

- **Rowan pins:** carved or whittled, used to secure cloaks and mark safe thresholds
- **Knot-cords:** braided cords with patterned knots that serve as both fastening and memory-key
- **Leaf coins:** thin, stamped pieces of bronze or silver used in exchanges and as witness markers
- **Hearth-ash sachets:** small pouches of ash from a sanctuary hearth, carried as "home" in your pocket
- **Well-stones:** smooth stones from a sacred well used as witness anchors in bargains
- **Name threads:** thin strips of cloth or cord kept close to the body, tied in patterns that encode a courtesy name

A token may be gifted in hospitality, traded in a bargain, or carried as personal protection. The meaning is always contextual. A gifted token can be an honor... or a subtle binding.

Why tokens matter in the Fading:
When sanctuaries are compromised and routes shift, tokens are how Sídhe maintain continuity. A refugee who has lost everything may still carry a pinch of hearth ash and one carved toggle. That can be enough to keep them real.

Implements (Tools that Assist Workings)

These are objects deliberately carried because they aid a School of magick or reinforce safe behavior around thresholds and witnesses.

Common implements include:

- **Mirror shards in leather:** used for Well & Mirror work; small reflections are easier to control than large ones
- **Water bowls:** shallow bowls used as portable witnesses; some are carved with patterns that "invite" memory
- **Stone chips:** small fragments of standing stones (never taken without offering), carried as witness to stabilize Oathcraft
- **Hawthorn thorn-cases:** tiny containers holding thorns used to mark boundaries and discourage trespass
- **Salt horns:** small horn containers of salt used for cleansing, offerings, and threshold marking
- **Tallow candles:** hearth-made candles whose smoke is believed to "settle" restless layers

The Sídhe prefer implements that can be explained away if discovered. A mirror shard is common. A bowl is common. A stone is common. Their power lies in **how they are used**, not in obvious mysticism.

Tools of Movement (Travel Kits)

Sídhe travel is a discipline. Their kits are shaped by three needs:

- avoid iron and obvious supplies
- stay ready for sudden flight
- keep one's identity anchored during long movement through thin places

Common travel tools:

- **Cloaks with hidden pockets:** for tokens, salt, and emergency offerings
- **Soft-soled footwear:** quiet, good grip, easy to repair with cord
- **Bone needles and waxed thread:** repairing clothing and binding wards
- **Small fire kit:** flint and tinder kept away from iron; Hearthbound often prepare these carefully

- **Ration bundles:** dried fruit, nuts, smoked fish where available; foods that can be eaten quietly
- **A "courtesy kit":** small offerings—milk dried into cakes, bread bits, shiny bronze slivers—used to honor thresholds and spirits

Travel kits often include one odd item specific to the carrier—something that anchors their sense of self. A song-stone. A carved piece from home. A ribbon taken from a lover. Sídhe do not call this "sentimentality." They call it *staying whole.*

Wards and Threshold Tools

These are domestic tools for maintaining "inside."

Common ward tools:

- **Lintel cords:** braided cords hung above doors; their knots encode who is welcome
- **Hearth-stones:** portable stones carried by moving sanctuaries; the hearth's "heart"
- **Guest bowls:** bowls placed at entry points for offerings, signifying hospitality terms
- **Charm bundles:** herbs wrapped in cloth (rowan, thyme, etc.) hung in corners or under eaves
- **Quiet bells (non-iron):** small bronze chimes used to detect boundary disturbances (never the loud church bells of the waking world)

A properly warded threshold is not a fortress wall. It is an agreement reinforced by objects. If someone violates the agreement—by bringing iron, by breaking hospitality—wards may sour, and the tools become warnings rather than protections.

Arms Without Iron

Sídhe do not live as helpless spirits. They carry weapons, but they avoid iron whenever possible.

Common non-iron arms:

- **Bronze blades:** knives, short swords, spears; prized and carefully maintained
- **Bone and antler weapons:** daggers, arrowheads, clubs; often Beastmarked favored
- **Stone heads:** rare in some regions but still used for tools and weapons
- **Sling stones and staffs:** simple, portable, quiet
- **Silver-edged items:** ceremonial and expensive; sometimes used as anti-corruption measures

Sídhe weapons often feature carved grips, cord wraps, and tokens tied to them—because a weapon can be both tool and witness. A spear carried in defense of a sanctuary becomes part of that sanctuary's story.

Lineage Tool Traditions

Each lineage favors certain objects and craft styles, shaped by their worldview.

Moundborn Tool Style: Hidden Function

Moundborn tools are subtle and easy to conceal.

- pins disguised as ordinary fasteners
- cords that look decorative but encode route information
- cloak clasps that double as emergency charm anchors
- "false ordinary" items that can pass inspection

A Moundborn's kit often includes decoy tokens—objects meant to be found and misunderstood.

Court-Sídhe Tool Style: Witness and Regalia

Court-Sídhe tools look like status because status is itself a form of witness.

- torcs, rings, sashes (non-iron) that signify treaty roles
- polished stones and bowls used in formal bargains
- carved staffs or rods used by heralds and sanctioners
- "term tokens" exchanged when bargains are spoken

A Court-Sídhe may carry fewer items, but each is loaded with meaning.

Hostborn Tool Style: Lightweight Readiness

Hostborn gear is built for movement and conflict.

- travel-light packs
- spare cords and repair kits
- sling stones, spears, and light armor
- weather tools: waxed cloaks, hood ties, ridge-route markers

Hostborn often keep "wind tokens"—feathers, carved bird bones, or ridge stones—anchors for Hollow Way travel.

Wellspring Tool Style: Bowls, Stones, and Quiet Water

Wellspring tools are about listening and witnessing.

- mirror shards and polished stones
- water bowls and vials
- reed cords and smooth pebbles
- offerings stored carefully for fords and wells

A Wellspring kit always includes something meant to be left behind—a planned offering. They consider traveling without offerings reckless.

Hearthbound Tool Style: Domestic Infrastructure

Hearthbound carry the most "unromantic" tools—because romance does not feed refugees.

- needles, thread, herbs, salves
- spare lintel cords
- portable hearthstones
- storage pouches and ration bundles
- small chimes and cleansing tools

Hearthbound sanctuaries often have workshops: carving, weaving, cooking, and ward-prep happen together.

Beastmarked Tool Style: Natural Pact Gear

Beastmarked tools blend with the wild.

- bone toggles, antler hooks
- hides treated with herbs rather than iron buckles
- hunting tools: snares, slings, non-iron spearheads
- totem tokens: claws, feathers, carved stones marked with animal sign

Beastmarked often avoid "too much" crafted ornament; their tools feel alive, used, and personal.

Artifacts and Relics: The Big Tools

Beyond everyday kits, there are objects whose stories have become heavy enough that they can shape events simply by existing. These are not common. They are fought over, hidden, inherited, or destroyed.

Sídhe Relics

Sídhe relics usually fall into a few themes:

- **Witness Relics:** stones, bowls, staffs, or torcs that strengthen or preserve old oaths
- **Sanctuary Relics:** hearthstones, lintels, and hall-keys that stabilize a specific place
- **Path Relics:** tokens that open or reveal Hollow Ways at safer timings
- **Memory Relics:** objects that preserve names, faces, and stories against the Fading
- **Pact Relics:** totem items bound to beasts or wild spirits

Example relic: The White Torc of Uisneach
Not merely jewelry; a portable declaration of witness-right. When worn, it marks the bearer as someone whose words are meant to be heard seriously—by Sídhe and, uncomfortably, by the land itself.

Example relic: The Hearthstone of Nine Lintels
A warm stone carried between moving refuges. It is said to keep children sleeping even when the world outside is loud with fear.

The Risk of Relics

Relics attract attention. They have strong tells. They invite theft. They tempt desperate Sídhe into overreliance. A relic can save a sanctuary—and also reveal it.

In the time of the Fading, some lineages argue that relics should be hidden forever, while others argue that relics should be used now, because there may be no later.

Fir Bolg Items: Stone, Labor, and Territory

Fir Bolg remnants have a material culture shaped by harsh land and harsher history. Where Sídhe tools emphasize relationship and layered etiquette, Fir Bolg tools emphasize **claim** and **endurance**.

Fir Bolg craft tends to be heavy, practical, and territorial. They build as if they expect to be attacked—because they do.

Fir Bolg Tool Themes

- **Stone-right markers:** carved stones used to mark clan territory; often placed where humans would not notice but Fir Bolg will defend violently
- **Bog-iron avoidance by necessity:** some Fir Bolg use iron more than Sídhe do, but in regions where iron is scarce or taboo, they rely on stone and bronze
- **Labor tools as weapons:** picks, hammers, spades—used both for survival and for war
- **Cairn codes:** stacked stone patterns that communicate warnings, routes, feuds, and safe passage
- **Oath-grooves:** carved notches in stone handled as "hard promises"—less flexible than Sídhe Oathcraft but deeply binding culturally

Notable Fir Bolg Items

Cenn Fódla's Stonehand Maul
A heavy stone-headed maul with a haft wrapped in hide and cord. It is said to have broken boundary stones placed by human kings. Whether that is literal or symbolic, the weapon represents Fir Bolg refusal to accept new claims.

Bog Spear Bundles
Bríde of the Bog Spears' clan carries spearheads treated against rot and hidden in reeds. These are not elegant. They are effective in ambush and vanish into wetland easily.

Cairn-Keys
Small stones carved with clan marks, carried to prove identity at hidden Fir Bolg gatherings. A Sídhe might mistake one for a simple pebble—until a Fir Bolg sees it and changes posture instantly.

Fir Bolg Trade and Theft

Fir Bolg items often enter Sídhe hands through alliance or war. A Fir Bolg cairn marker stolen by humans can destabilize territorial boundaries and provoke brutal reprisals. A Sídhe carrying Fir Bolg tokens risks being mistaken for an agent—sometimes useful, sometimes fatal.

Fomorian Items: Rot, Brine, and Twisted Gift

Fomorian tools are not simply "evil weapons." They are objects designed to corrupt relationship. Where Sídhe tools anchor identity, Fomorian tools aim to **unanchor** it—making a place forget its own rules, making a person doubt their own name, making a sanctuary become hostile to those it once sheltered.

Fomorian craft is often a perversion of natural material:

- bone carved too sharply
- shells used as blades
- kelp woven into cords that feel alive
- stone smeared with tar-dark residue
- "gifts" that work too well at first and then rot

Fomorian Tool Themes

- **Blight tokens:** small objects placed in wells, under hearthstones, or inside barrow seams to spoil memory and sleep
- **Sea-brine chains:** not always iron; sometimes bone-linked or shell-linked, designed to bind and humiliate captives
- **Rot bargains:** items given as "aid" that carry hidden obligations or corruption
- **Sour mirrors:** reflective surfaces that show fear rather than truth, used to manipulate victims
- **Storm hooks:** cruel tools used by coastal strains to drag people into water or caves

Notable Fomorian Items

The Black Kelp Crown
A living regalia-like mass worn by coastal brood leaders. It is

said to invite storms and confuse routes. Its true danger is not physical—it makes the sea feel like it is listening for your name.

Widow's Reflection Shard (Loch Scáth)
A grey mirror fragment used in bargains with the Grey Widow. Those who look into it too long begin to see themselves as prey. It is often offered to desperate humans as a "protection charm," which ensures the Widow gains influence through fear.

Brine-Needle Fetish
A small bundle of fish spines and salt-crystals used to sour hearth comfort. When hidden near a sleeping area, it brings nightmares and exhaustion—turning refuge into despair.

Fomorian "Gifts" as Weapons

The Fomorians love gifts because gifts invoke hospitality. They exploit Sídhe culture's most sacred structure to poison it. A Fomorian offering accepted under guest-right terms can fracture a hall from within if not handled with extreme caution.

This is why wise Sídhe are suspicious of anything that:

- arrives too conveniently
- solves a problem too quickly
- demands secrecy
- asks for a name in payment
- "improves" a sanctuary in a way that feels wrong

Human Tools That Threaten the Sídhe

Because this chapter would be incomplete without acknowledging the enemy's craft:

- **Iron nails and chains:** used to "fix" thresholds into waking-world certainty
- **Church bells:** loud declarations that thicken layered boundaries
- **Written claims and charters:** not magickal, but culturally powerful—naming land in ways that override old witness networks
- **Hounds trained for tells:** animals taught to follow glamour residue
- **Salt lines and charm traps:** folk practices weaponized into anti-fae measures

Human tools are dangerous not only because they harm. They are dangerous because they spread a worldview: that the world is singular, solid, and owned.

Tools as Story Engines

In this setting, objects are not loot in the usual sense. They are **plot weight**.

A stolen hearthstone can collapse a refuge network.
A recovered well-stone can restore a sanctuary's witness.
A Fomorian blight token found under a lintel can explain months of nightmares.
A Fir Bolg cairn-key can turn an enemy into an ally—or reveal your presence.
A Court-Sídhe torc can make your words matter in a negotiation that would otherwise fail.
A Moundborn veil pin can hide your face from memory long enough to cross a guarded valley.

Tools carry consequence. Tools carry history. Tools decide whether the Sídhe remain a people for another season.

And in the time of the Fading, that is what every object is for.

BOOK 0 — CHAPTER 8

Bestiary & Threats of Éire

Éire is not "full of monsters" in the way a human storybook imagines. It is full of **pressures**—living things, organizations, places, and hungers that behave like predators. Some are ancient. Some are new. Some are ordinary humans made terrifying by certainty and iron. Some are the land itself, wounded and reacting.

For the Sídhe, "threat" does not always mean "enemy to kill." A threat may be:

- a road crew with a blacksmith and a priest
- a hungry village in winter, frightened enough to believe any rumor
- a sanctified bell tower planted on a boundary seam
- a Fomorian token hidden under a hearthstone
- a Fir Bolg warband defending what they consider ancestral stone-right
- a restless spirit that cannot forgive a broken promise
- a Hollow Way that has gone wrong and now eats time

This chapter provides a broad bestiary of **what endangers the Sídhe**—creatures and factions, yes, but also places and patterns. When these threats appear in play, they should feel distinct: each has its own texture, motives, behaviors, and "tells," and each interacts with Sídhe culture in ways that create difficult choices rather than simple combats.

The Waking World as Predator

Human Threats That Hunt the Unseen

Humans do not need claws to be dangerous. The most lethal human tools are attention, certainty, and organization. Where humans settle, they anchor reality. Where they become afraid, they become cruel. Where they become righteous, they become relentless.

1) Iron-Hunter Bands (Nail-Men, Salt-Ropes, Hound Crews)

These are the direct hunters of Sídhe presence: hired men, zealots, mercenaries, and specialists who have learned enough old lore to make it weaponized.

How they behave

- They move in small, disciplined groups.
- They probe, rather than charge—testing thresholds, watching reactions.
- They prefer capture to slaughter when possible, because captives become proof, leverage, and bait.
- They rely on informants and frightened villagers as much as on weapons.

Common signs they are near

- iron nails placed in "innocent" places: lintels, gates, fence posts
- salt lines in odd patterns
- hounds that seem too focused on empty air
- sudden village interest in "old stories" that feels staged

Notable threat leader: Eadric Nailhand

A captain infamous for hammering iron into sacred places as

a signature. He collects tokens, learns customs, and has survived enough encounters to be pragmatic. He is dangerous because he does not need to believe Sídhe are evil—he only needs to believe they are *huntable*.

2) Fear-Mobs and Changelings Panic

Sometimes the threat is not an organized band, but a village snapping under pressure: famine, disease, raids, or religious fear.

How they behave

- They seek scapegoats.
- They adopt harsh "protections" (iron, salt, cruel tests) that harm Sídhe and humans alike.
- They turn neighbors into suspects and suspects into victims quickly.

Why this is especially dangerous
Sídhe survival depends on subtle relationships with human communities—quiet courtesies, unspoken agreements, "we leave milk, you leave us peace." Panic breaks these networks overnight.

Common story engine
A human child is sick or strange. The village decides it is a changeling. The Sídhe must intervene—not only to save the innocent, but to prevent a spiral of anti-fae violence that will poison the entire region.

3) Sanctifiers and Bell-Builders (Religious Pressure as Weapon)

A priest does not need to swing a sword. A priest can change a well's story. A priest can place a bell where its sound "claims" a valley. A priest can persuade a lord to cut a hawthorn grove because it is "pagan."

How they behave

- They rename places and overwrite witness networks.
- They encourage written record and public certainty.
- They push "cleansing" campaigns against ambiguous sites.

Notable figure: Abbot Ciarán of the Nine Psalms
A careful, intelligent threat. He keeps records. He trains men to recognize tells. He believes he is saving souls, which makes him dangerous in a way cruelty never quite is.

4) Raiders and Foreign Outposts

Coastal raiders and foreign settlers bring new behaviors and new disregard for local taboo. They also bring trade—especially iron goods deeper inland.

How they behave

- They strike quickly and leave.
- They take captives.
- They may unknowingly steal relics or tokens that anchor sanctuaries.

Notable figure: Jarl Hrafn the Harbor-Wolf
Treats the unseen like a challenge. Will bargain if it benefits him. Will raid a mound if he thinks treasure lies beneath. His unpredictability makes him an ideal "non-moral" threat: not evil, simply hungry.

Fir Bolg Threats

Stone-Right Warriors, Harsh Allies, and Territorial Hunger

Fir Bolg remnants are not inherently enemies of the Sídhe, but their survival strategy often conflicts with Sídhe needs. Where Sídhe live in layers, Fir Bolg live in **ground truth**: stone, soil, and labor memory. They understand occupation and dispossession in their bones, and they do not surrender territory politely.

1) Stone-Right Warbands

These are armed groups defending a claim—sometimes against humans, sometimes against Sídhe, sometimes against rival Fir Bolg clans.

How they behave

- They use ambush and terrain: bog edges, stony ridges, narrow passes.
- They place cairn codes that function as warnings and traps.
- They demand tribute for passage through "their" lands.

Notable leader: Cenn Fódla "Stonehand"

Proud, scarred, old enough to remember too many betrayals. He may ally with Sídhe if it recognizes Fir Bolg rights. He may become a bitter antagonist if he believes the Sídhe are attempting to "slip away" from responsibility while Fir Bolg bleed.

2) Bog-Spear Clans and Wetland Hunters

Wetlands are where Fir Bolg often have advantage. These clans know routes humans fear to walk. They can vanish into mist and reed.

How they behave

- They avoid direct conflict unless cornered.
- They harry supply lines.
- They punish trespass with silent brutality.

Notable figure: Bríde of the Bog Spears

A scout-captain who has worked with Sídhe flights in covert raids. She can be ally, rival, or the knife-edge between two factions.

3) Bitter Holdouts and Grudge-Keepers

Some Fir Bolg groups define themselves by ancient grievance. They may view the Sídhe as old conquerors and refuse alliance even against human encroachment.

How they behave

- They sabotage Sídhe routes.
- They spread rumors to humans about "hill devils" to cause pressure.
- They steal tokens or relics as revenge-symbols.

Story engine

A sanctuary relies on a route through Fir Bolg land. A grudge-keeper clan blocks it, forcing the Protagonist to negotiate, intimidate, or find a dangerous alternative.

Fomorian Threats

Sea-Dark Strains, Blight-Broods, and Rot That Wears a Smile

If human threats "flatten" the world through certainty, Fomorian threats **spoil** it through corruption. They are not simply violent. They are invasive. They twist hospitality into poison, memory into nightmare, and sacred places into traps.

Fomorians rarely present as one unified nation. They appear as strains, broods, and localized horrors—each with its own flavor of ruin.

1) Coastal Strains (Brine Kings, Kelp Crowns, Storm Broods)

These Fomorians cling to the western edge and the deep coasts. They ride storms like horses and treat the sea as a mouth that must be fed.

How they behave

- They raid in foul weather.
- They use human raiders as tools, bribing them with safe passage.
- They poison fisheries and ruin nets to create hunger and panic.

Notable threat: The Brood of the Black Kelp Crown

Breeds blight-creatures in tidal caves. Wears living seaweed regalia. Leaves "gifts" that smell like brine and rot beneath beds and under hearthstones.

2) The Spoilers (Blight-Workers and Token-Hiders)

These Fomorians prefer quiet sabotage. They plant blight tokens in wells and sanctuaries. They don't need armies if they can turn a refuge against itself.

How they behave

- They spread exhaustion and nightmares.
- They sour food stores.
- They turn trust into paranoia.

Notable entity: The Grey Widow of Loch Scáth

Not a warlord but a corruption-personality: a bargain-maker in a wrong-reflection lake. She offers help that always binds.

She collects names, grief, and the subtle debts that break communities.

3) The Deep-Ugly (Brutal Raiders and Bone Champions)

Some Fomorians are simply monstrous in the way humans expect: huge bodies, cruel laughter, hunger for domination. They exist to remind the Sídhe that the old wars were real.

Notable leader: Muirgen Deep-Tusk
A raider-lord who hates Wellspring Sídhe especially. He uses captives as carriers for blight tokens, forcing sanctuaries to choose between rescuing victims and protecting the refuge.

4) Dream-Pressures (Nightmare Entities and Sleep Rot)

Not every Fomorian threat arrives with teeth. Some arrive in sleep.

How they behave

- They infest crowded refuges where fear is high.
- They feed on guilt and despair.
- They leave victims exhausted, suspicious, and emotionally raw—perfect conditions for internal collapse.

Common signs

- recurring dreams shared by multiple people
- children waking with salt-taste on their lips
- a hearth that feels cold even when burning
- sudden fixation on betrayal ("someone here is lying") without evidence

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The Wild and the In-Between

Spirits, Beasts, and Old Things That Do Not Serve Anyone

Not all threats are aligned with humans, Fir Bolg, or Fomorians. Some are simply what happens when a layered world is wounded: old spirits awaken, beasts grow strange, and places become hungry.

1) The Aos Sí That Are Not Kin

The Sídhe are a people, but the otherworld holds other presences—some ancient, some feral, some indifferent.

Examples

- **Hearth-Eaters:** entities that feed on domestic warmth, weakening refuge morale
- **Stone-Grudgers:** spirits bound to standing stones who punish oath-breakers indiscriminately
- **Mist-Swimmers:** beings that drift along Hollow Ways like predators, drawn to panic

These are not "evil" by default. They are **rules** given appetite.

2) Oath-Wraiths (Broken Promise Manifestations)

When oaths break in places heavy with witness, the breach can become a presence: not a ghost of a person, but a ghost of an agreement.

How they behave

- They linger at thresholds and fords.
- They target those who resemble the oath-breaker by association.
- They create misfortune loops: accidents, lost items, escalating conflict.

Story engine
A sanctuary is haunted by the residue of a broken bargain. The Protagonist must uncover the breach and address it—because ignoring it invites more rot than any blade.

3) Barrow-Guardians and Hall-Sentinels

Some old halls have guardians—constructs, spirits, or bound presences designed to protect sanctuaries from intrusion. In stable times they are allies. In the Fading, damaged witness networks can make them hostile even to Sídhe.

Examples

- **Lamp-Watchers:** faint lights that follow intruders; if angered, they lead you into wrong corridors
- **Door-Hounds:** spirit guardians that test courtesy ruthlessly
- **Knot-Sentinels:** presences bound to carved oath pillars, awakened when treaties are threatened

4) Wild Beasts Gone Wrong (Blight-Touched and Fear-Taught)

As human settlement expands, wild corridors shrink. Animals are trapped, hunted, and displaced. Some are touched by Fomorian spoilage; others simply become desperate.

Examples

- **Bog-Stags with wrong eyes** that lure hunters into deep water
- **Houndpacks trained by iron-hunters** that recognize glamour tells
- **Crows that gather too intelligently** around battlefields, possibly linked to deeper omen forces

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Cursed Places and Environmental Threats

When Geography Becomes the Monster

In Éire, places can become hostile. Not because "magic is in the air" in a generic way, but because witness, memory, and relationship have been damaged.

1) Spoiled Wells

A well can be capped, renamed, polluted, or blighted. When it is, it stops being a witness and becomes a mouth of wrong memory.

Signs

- water tastes metallic or bitter without reason
- reflections distort emotional intent
- those who drink become prone to despair or rage
- offerings "disappear" too quickly, as if something is feeding

Notable hazard: Loch Scáth and its wrong reflections
A place where bargains stick in ugly ways and grief becomes currency.

2) Broken Hollow Ways

A Hollow Way can fail, twist, or become predatory if:

- its seam is cut by a road
- iron anchors thicken the boundary
- Fomorians infest a thin place
- desperate travelers abuse it in bad faith

Consequences

- lost time
- loss of memory threads
- travelers returning "wrong"
- routes delivering you to dangerous thresholds

Notable hazard: The Ashen Turn
A once-reliable path that now brings travelers to a burnt sanctuary ruin where the air tastes like old promises.

3) Battlefields Heavy With Omen

Old wars leave residues. New wars add to them. Some battlefields become places where:

- crows gather unnaturally
- the dead feel "close"
- fear spreads quickly
- violence repeats itself like a habit

These places can be exploited by Fomorians and feared by humans, making them contested territory.

4) Hawthorn Wounds

Hawthorn is not merely a plant in this setting; it is a cultural boundary marker. When hawthorn groves are cut or burned, the land often reacts—sometimes with subtle misfortune, sometimes with overt hostility.

Story engine
A human lord orders hawthorn cleared for a road. The area becomes unstable: travelers vanish, sleep breaks, livestock panic. Humans blame the Sídhe. The Sídhe blame the lord. Fomorians exploit the chaos. The Protagonist is trapped in the center.

"Named" Threat Profiles

Ready-to-Use Encounter Anchors

These are not stat blocks—just vivid, repeatable threats you can drop into scenes.

1) The Nail Cart

A small wagon with iron nails, salt sacks, and a priest's tokens. It moves under guard between villages, reinforcing "protections." Wherever it stops, Sídhe presence becomes harder.

2) The Brine Gift

A sealed bundle left at a threshold: fishbone charm, kelp cord, a "helpful" offering. If accepted, it anchors a Fomorian claim. If rejected improperly, it can still sour hospitality.

3) The Cairn Claim

A new stone stack appears overnight on a ridge. Fir Bolg code. It means: *this land is watched.* Ignore it, and ambush follows. Respect it, and negotiation becomes possible—at a price.

4) The Hollow-Way Child

A child returns from a misstep into a Hollow Way. They are alive, but their courtesy name is wrong, and they cannot remember a parent's face. The sanctuary debates: is it safe to keep them? The Protagonist must decide quickly.

5) The Bell-Shadow

A new bell tower's sound crosses a valley and makes a sanctuary feel "thin." Wells taste wrong. Glamour becomes costly. Dreams become loud. The bell is not merely sound—it is a claim.

How Threats Interlock

The setting becomes most alive when threats combine:

- **Iron-hunters + Fear-mobs:** organized hunting backed by community panic
- **Church sanctifiers + road builders:** renaming + infrastructure = fast Fading
- **Fomorians + raiders:** storm-broods bribing humans to do the dirty work
- **Fir Bolg warbands + sanctuary refugees:** territory disputes under desperate pressure
- **Spoiled wells + Winter refuge:** nightmare spiral inside a crowded safehouse

These combinations force the Sídhe into the kinds of choices the setting is built for:

- fight loudly and risk exposure, or act quietly and risk moral compromise
- negotiate with a human lord, or sabotage his forge and invite retaliation
- accept Fir Bolg "protection," or refuse and lose a corridor
- shelter refugees and strain hearth stability, or turn them away and fracture the people
- destroy a blight token and reveal your sanctuary, or hide and let rot spread

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Closing Note: Threat as Theme

In *The Fading*, the bestiary is not a zoo. It is an ecology of pressure. A creature's danger is not only its violence, but what it represents:

- Humans represent certainty and conquest.
- Fir Bolg represent land-right and harsh memory.
- Fomorians represent corruption and spoilage.
- Wild spirits represent consequence without mercy.
- Cursed places represent wounds in witness and relationship.

The Protagonist survives not by winning every fight, but by understanding this ecology—choosing where to apply force, where to apply courtesy, where to apply secrecy, and where to apply sacrifice.

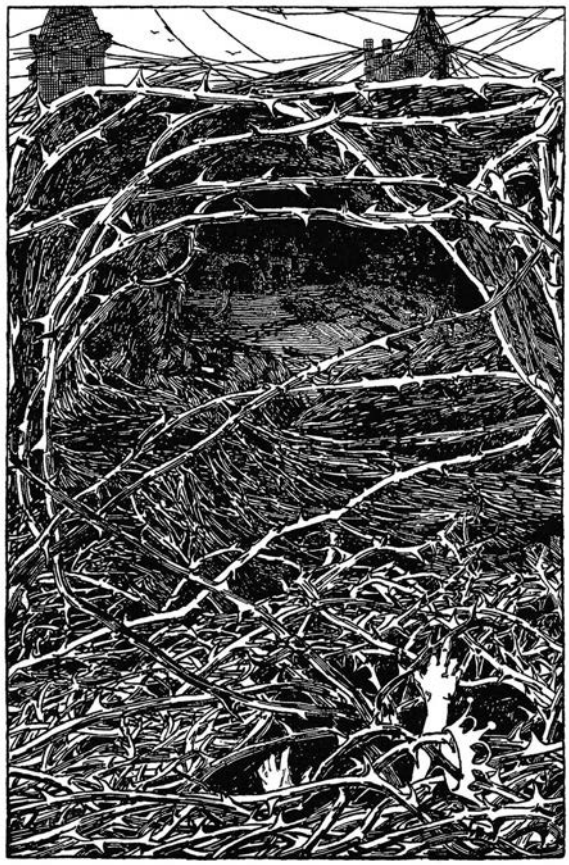
Because the greatest threat in Éire is not any single monster.

It is the slow agreement of the world to forget the Sídhe were ever real.

BOOK 0 — CHAPTER 9

Campaign Frames & Opening Situations

A Director running *The Fading* is not building a "quest line." You are building a **pressure-cooker** with seasons, witnesses, sanctuaries, and consequences. The setting is designed to produce hard choices: not simply "can the Protagonist win," but **what must they risk to keep their people real?**



Campaign Frames are scaffolds—broad shapes of play that naturally produce scenes, dilemmas, rivals, and evolving stakes. Each frame below includes:

- the frame's core promise (what the campaign feels like)
- the Protagonist's likely role(s)
- recurring pressures and escalating threats
- signature scenes (moments that should show up)
- a cluster of opening situations you can begin with immediately
- ways to twist the frame so it stays personal and surprising
- how each of the six lineages tends to engage with it (for Director guidance)

You can run one frame for an entire campaign or blend two or three. The setting thrives on overlap: a refuge-run becomes treaty politics; a blight hunt becomes a feud; a sanctuary defense becomes a moral crisis.

To keep the One-on-One tone strong: every frame assumes a single Protagonist who becomes the focal point of the Sídhe struggle. The world is wide, but the story is intimate—your Protagonist's name, allies, and home ground matter.

Core Campaign Pillars for This Setting

Before choosing a frame, understand the setting's "pillars"—the recurring themes that make the campaign feel like Éire rather than generic fantasy.

Pillar 1: Sanctuary Is a Character

A sanctuary has needs, moods, and vulnerabilities. It shapes scenes. It creates stakes. Threatening the sanctuary is never abstract—it means children lose sleep, routes fail, and names become unsafe.

Pillar 2: Witness and Etiquette Are Power

Social scenes matter because agreements matter. A bargain is a weapon. A guest-right declaration can protect or trap. A well can judge intent.

Pillar 3: Enemies Are Pressure Systems

Humans, Fir Bolg, and Fomorians are not just "monsters." They are ecosystems. If you kill one hunter, the system adapts. If you fix one place, another weakens.

Pillar 4: The Fading Is Both External and Internal

The biggest threat is not simply invasion. It is division, despair, and compromise that turns the Sídhe into strangers to themselves.

Pillar 5: Seasons Drive Escalation

Each season changes what is possible and what is urgent. A campaign feels alive when spring opens doors, summer brings loud pursuit, autumn demands hard accounting, and winter tests the hearth.

How to Use This Chapter as a Director

Pick **one primary frame** and **one secondary frame**. Let the secondary frame emerge naturally.

Example pairings:

- *Sanctuary Under Siege + Blight & Omen Investigation*
- *Refuge Run Network + Court Intrigue & Oath Politics*
- *Hollow Ways Exploration + Coastal Storm War*
- *Fir Bolg Border War + Human Iron-Hunter Conspiracy*

Then choose one opening situation and begin in medias res —mid-crisis, mid-journey, mid-feast, mid-bargain.

FRAME A: Sanctuary Under Siege

"Hold the Inside"

Core Promise

A home (barrow hall, hidden cottage, moving refuge, wild glade) is threatened by a tightening ring of human pressure, Fomorian sabotage, and internal fracture. The campaign is about **keeping the sanctuary real** long enough to survive the season—or to move without catastrophe.

The Protagonist's Likely Roles

- Hillwarden's chosen runner (Moundborn)
- Hearthbound ward-crafter responsible for thresholds
- Hostborn scout-captain assigned to perimeter defense
- Court-Sídhe envoy trying to bind external protections
- Wellspring listener detecting sabotage
- Beastmarked guardian of the wild corridor around the sanctuary

Recurring Pressures

- increasing human activity nearby (roads, farms, patrols, bells)
- iron-hunter probing tactics (salt lines, nails, hounds)
- "soft" social threats: informants, frightened villagers, rumors
- resource pressure: food, winter supplies, exhausted healers
- internal strain: refugees, old grudges, political factions

Signature Scenes to Include

- **The Threshold Test:** someone brings in an object that shouldn't be inside (intentionally or by ignorance). How you respond defines your hall's future.
- **The Quiet Council:** leaders argue in whispers while children sleep nearby.
- **The Red Mist Night:** fog rolls in wrong; someone's dreams are not their own.
- **The Nail in the Lintel:** you discover iron placed where it will unmake your wards.
- **The Sanctuary Choice:** defend, bargain, or abandon—each with a cost.

Opening Situations (pick one)

1. **The Bell Across the Valley**
   A new bell tower rings from a half-finished stone chapel. Every ring makes glamour harder and sleep worse. The sanctuary's elders demand action before the bell is consecrated permanently.
   - Complication: the priest is gentle and beloved; the bell was funded as famine relief.
   - Twist: the bell is not just a church project—Eadric Nailhand is using it to map the area.
2. **The Refugees at the Door**
   A half-dozen Sídhe arrive exhausted, chased by iron-hunters. Your hearth stores are already tight. Taking them risks exposure; refusing them risks cultural collapse.
   - Complication: one refugee carries a "gift" they swear is harmless. It smells faintly of brine.
   - Twist: the refugees include a Fir Bolg child under Sídhe protection, a political grenade.
3. **The Sanctuary's Memory Breaks**
   The well in the hall stops "recognizing" people. Names feel wrong. Reflections in bowls show

unfamiliar intent. The sanctuary is being unanchored.

- Complication: nobody wants to admit it might be internal betrayal.
- Twist: the cause is an old oath breach resurfacing, not direct Fomorian sabotage.

4. **The Road Crew Camp**
   A human camp appears suspiciously close. They claim they're repairing a track for trade. They also have a blacksmith.
   - Complication: some Sídhe argue to let them be; conflict draws attention.
   - Twist: a sympathetic human in the camp can be turned into an ally—if approached correctly.

How This Frame Escalates

- **Act 1:** probing threats, internal suspicion, first small compromises
- **Act 2:** direct confrontation—raid, infiltration, or forced bargain
- **Act 3:** the sanctuary must transform—relocate, become mobile, or become a fortress with allies

Lineage Lenses

- Moundborn: concealment tactics, decoy sanctuaries, misdirection wars
- Court-Sídhe: binding external agreements, sanctioning traitors
- Hostborn: perimeter raids, striking supply lines
- Wellspring: detecting spoilage and omen patterns
- Hearthbound: rationing, morale, ward maintenance under strain
- Beastmarked: guarding wild corridors, hunting infiltrators by instinct

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FRAME B: Refuge Run Network

"Move the People"

Core Promise

The campaign is built around moving refugees, tokens, and information between sanctuaries while the waking world tightens. The tone is urgent, emotional, and often bittersweet. You can't save everyone, but you can save **someone**, and that matters.

The Protagonist's Likely Roles

- Hostborn courier running the Hawk-Thread Path
- Hearthbound coordinator of safehouses
- Moundborn veilrunner escorting hidden travelers
- Wellspring guide navigating omen-safe routes
- Beastmarked scout clearing wild corridors
- Court-Sídhe negotiator securing passage through hostile territory

Recurring Pressures

- compromised safehouses and informant networks
- scarce food and medicine
- children, elders, and wounded slowing travel
- Hollow Ways becoming unreliable
- moral crisis: who gets moved first?

Signature Scenes to Include

- **The Safehouse That Isn't Safe:** a place that should be hidden has been marked.
- **The Courtesy at the Ford:** a moment where etiquette saves lives.
- **The Lost Time Return:** travelers emerge with missing hours—or missing memory.
- **The Split Decision:** choose one path and leave another group behind.
- **The Quiet Celebration:** a tiny feast in a ruined place, because hope is fuel.

Opening Situations

1. **The Winter Escort**
   A child must be moved before a village panic turns lethal. The route crosses territory claimed by Fir Bolg.

- Twist: the child's true name is bound to a token now in human hands.

2. **The Burned Safehouse**
   A refuge cottage is destroyed. Survivors scatter. You must find them before iron-hunters do.

- Twist: the safehouse keeper is missing—either captured or turned.

3. **The Token Courier**
   You carry a sanctuary anchor token that must reach a moving refuge before dusk or the refuge collapses into visibility.

- Twist: you are being hunted by a hound crew trained to follow glamour residue.

4. **The Hollow Way Misstep**
   Your route opens wrong and dumps you near a Fomorian coastal cave.

- Twist: you find captives who will die if you don't act—at the risk of your mission.

Escalation

Over time, the network becomes a character: it grows, fractures, gets infiltrated, and must be rebuilt.

Lineage Lenses

- Hostborn + Hearthbound shine here, but everyone matters: courts bind passage rights; wells guide; moundborn hide; beastmarked clear wild.

FRAME C: Court Intrigue & Oath Politics

"Keep the Law Alive"

Core Promise

This is a campaign of bargains, witness games, internal faction conflict, and external diplomacy. The Protagonist becomes a pivotal instrument—envoy, sanctioner, hostage-keeper, or unwilling heir—trying to keep Sídhe law from collapsing under the Fading.

The Protagonist's Likely Roles

- Court-Sídhe herald/sanctioner in training
- hostage assigned to "protect" a treaty
- Moundborn spy attached to a court for security
- Wellspring witness-reader whose omens disrupt politics
- Hostborn enforcer who hates this delicate work but must do it
- Hearthbound steward whose supplies decide policy

Recurring Pressures

- Bright vs Twilight ideological fractures
- desperate bargains with humans or Fir Bolg
- hidden Fomorian manipulation via "gifts" and fear
- personal rivalries made lethal by stakes
- the fear that "law is a luxury" during survival

Signature Scenes

- **The Witness Ring:** bargaining at stones or wells where lies hurt.
- **The Gift Exchange:** a token that is honor—or trap.
- **The Sanction Moment:** naming a breach publicly.
- **The Hostage Dinner:** hospitality with knives under the table.
- **The Quiet Coup:** an attempt to replace leadership without open war.

Opening Situations

1. **Treaty With a Human King**
   A lord offers sanctuary protection in exchange for "inspection rights."

- Twist: he intends to map your tells and sell them to iron-hunters.

2. **Fir Bolg Passage Bargain**
   A corridor needed for refugees runs through Fir Bolg stone-right land.

- Twist: the price is recognition—public and humiliating—of Fir Bolg ancestral claims.

3. **The Broken Guest-Right**
   A guest in your hall violates hospitality. The court must respond or lose legitimacy.

- Twist: the violator is your ally's child, and punishment will fracture the network.

4. **The Oath That Won't Die**
   A decades-old breach resurfaces as misfortune and haunt.

- Twist: resolving it requires admitting a revered elder lied long ago.

Escalation

Intrigue campaigns escalate by narrowing options: every compromise ties your hands later, every sanction creates enemies, every bargain shifts what "being Sídhe" means.

FRAME D: Blight & Omen Investigation

"Find the Rot Before It Spreads"

Core Promise

A mystery campaign rooted in Wells, hearths, and witness. The Protagonist tracks corruption—Fomorian tokens, spoiled water, nightmare patterns—before it destroys sanctuaries from within.

The Protagonist's Likely Roles

- Wellspring omen-reader
- Hearthbound curse-breaker
- Moundborn investigator of hidden causes
- Hostborn hunter of the physical source
- Beastmarked tracker of blight-beasts
- Court-Sídhe mediator dealing with paranoia fallout

Recurring Pressures

- fear and scapegoating within refuges
- unreliable testimony (glamour, missing memories)
- Fomorian bargains offering "help"
- evidence hidden in domestic spaces (lintels, bowls, hearthstones)
- time pressure: if not solved, the sanctuary collapses

Signature Scenes

- **The Wrong Reflection:** a mirror shows intent that doesn't match words.
- **The Spoiled Offering:** an offering disappears too fast—something is feeding.
- **The Shared Dream:** multiple people describe the same nightmare.
- **The Blight Token Find:** an object hidden where it should never be.
- **The Accusation Spiral:** the community turns on someone innocent.

Opening Situations

1. **Nightmare in the Nine Lintels**
   Children wake screaming across multiple safehouses the same night.

- Twist: the nightmares are coordinated to drive refugees out into exposure.

2. **The Well Goes Bitter**
   A sacred well begins tasting metallic. Reflections distort.

- Twist: the cause is not Fomorian—humans have diverted waste upstream.

3. **The Gift That Heals Too Well**
   A charm appears that "solves" illness quickly, and everyone wants it.

- Twist: it is a rot bargain—each use binds the user deeper.

4. **The Blight Beast**
   Animals near a corridor behave wrong; a stag leads travelers into bog water.

- Twist: the beast is not purely corrupted—it is also trying to warn you.

Escalation

Each solved mystery reveals deeper rot networks and forces moral decisions: do you expose a traitor publicly or keep peace? Do you destroy a place to save others?

FRAME E: Hollow Ways Exploration

"Walk the Seams of the Island"

Core Promise

Exploration without "dungeon crawling." The Protagonist navigates Hollow Ways, lost halls, broken routes, and time-skewed sanctuaries to recover relics, rescue captives, or restore a corridor crucial to survival.

The Protagonist's Likely Roles

- Hollow Way guide and scout
- token courier carrying keys
- Moundborn pathkeeper
- Hostborn runner with the nerve to move fast
- Wellspring omen-reader to avoid wrong turns
- Beastmarked companion for wild navigation

Recurring Pressures

- routes that change with season and emotion
- guardian entities that test courtesy
- time loss and memory fracture risks
- pursuit spilling into the layered world
- the temptation to "escape the war" instead of fighting it

Signature Scenes

- **The Door That Isn't a Door:** a seam in grass, a stone shadow, a hawthorn gap.
- **The Courtesy Trial:** you must speak and behave correctly or be refused passage.
- **The Time Return:** you emerge to find days or months passed.
- **The Hall of Old Witness:** you meet a guardian that remembers ancient wars.
- **The Route Rescue:** someone is lost between paths and fading.

Opening Situations

1. **The Corridor Collapse**
   A major refuge route fails. You must find why and restore an alternative.

- Twist: the seam is cut by a human road you cannot easily sabotage.

2. **The Relic Retrieval**
   A path-relay token is trapped inside a compromised barrow hall.

- Twist: the hall's guardian no longer recognizes Sídhe as rightful.

3. **The Captive in the Seam**
   A person is trapped "between" after fleeing iron-hunters.

- Twist: freeing them may cost your own memory or time.

4. **The Wrong Feast Hall**
   You enter a hall where a feast is always beginning.

- Twist: leaving requires concluding a bargain no one remembers making.

Escalation

Exploration campaigns escalate by revealing hidden truths: forgotten treaties, ancient betrayals, relics that could stabilize sanctuaries, and the terrifying fact that some paths are dying permanently.

FRAME F: Coastal Storm War

"Fight the Sea-Dark"

Core Promise

A campaign focused on western coasts and storm seasons—Fomorian strains, raiders, captives, spoiled fisheries, and the sea as an intelligent pressure. The Protagonist becomes a defender of shoreline sanctuaries and a hunter of brine corruption.

The Protagonist's Likely Roles

- Hostborn raider-hunter
- Wellspring sea-omen reader
- Beastmarked coastal tracker (seal, gull, raven lines)
- Court-Sídhe negotiator managing alliances with humans against Fomorians
- Hearthbound keeper maintaining storm refuges
- Moundborn veilwright hiding coastal halls

Signature Scenes

- **The Storm Bargain:** an offer of safe passage at a hidden cost.
- **The Captive Cave:** rescue under tide pressure.
- **The Rotten Net:** a village pushed to desperation.
- **The Kelp Crown Sight:** an enemy presence like living regalia.
- **The Sea's Memory:** water remembers a betrayal and demands payment.

Opening Situations

1. **The Fish Rot**
   A coastal village's catch spoils overnight. Panic rises.
   - Twist: humans blame the Sídhe; Fomorians planned the scapegoat.
2. **Raiders with a Fomorian "Guide"**
   Raiders strike with unnatural accuracy in storms.
   - Twist: the guide is a brine-bargained human with a token in their throat.
3. **The Cave of Sleeping Names**
   Captives vanish into a tidal cave rumored to steal names.
   - Twist: a Sídhe youth you know is among them.
4. **The Kelp Crown Gift**
   A "protective charm" spreads among fishermen.
   - Twist: it's a blight token network anchoring a coastal brood.

FRAME G: Fir Bolg Border War

"Stone-Right and Survival"

Core Promise

A campaign about contested territory, ancestral claims, and harsh alliance. The Protagonist is forced to navigate Fir Bolg politics and the Sídhe's need for corridors and sanctuaries.

The Protagonist's Likely Roles

- envoy to Fir Bolg clans
- warrior protecting corridor routes
- mediator between refugees and territorial defenders
- investigator uncovering old betrayal that fuels the feud

Signature Scenes

- **Cairn Code Challenge:** proving you understand their claim.
- **The Stone Council:** negotiation without softness.
- **The Bog Ambush:** a test of respect and competence.
- **The Shared Enemy Moment:** humans or Fomorians force cooperation.
- **The Claim Choice:** accept humiliation or lose the corridor.

Opening Situations

1. **The Corridor Tax**
   Fir Bolg demand tribute for passage.

- Twist: the tribute is not goods—it's recognition of a story that courts deny.

2. **The Stolen Cairn-Key**
   Humans steal Fir Bolg marker stones, destabilizing boundaries.

- Twist: Fir Bolg assume Sídhe involvement and prepare retaliation.

3. **The Shared Blight**
   Fomorian corruption hits Fir Bolg wetland and Sídhe well alike.

- Twist: a Fir Bolg leader will ally only if you admit past wrongs.

4. **The Hostage Demand**
   Fir Bolg require a hostage for trust.

- Twist: the hostage is you, or someone you cannot abandon.

FRAME H: The Last Court

"Keep a People Whole"

Core Promise

This is the epic frame: the Protagonist is positioned to influence the survival of an entire region's Sídhe—perhaps as heir, chosen, or reluctant symbol. It blends sanctuary defense, diplomacy, refugee networks, and blight war into one long arc.

Signature Scenes

- **The Great Gathering at Risk:** a feast that could unify or doom everyone.
- **The Public Sanction:** naming betrayal to save legitimacy.
- **The Relic Decision:** use a powerful artifact now or hide it forever.
- **The Winter Choice:** choose which sanctuaries will be abandoned.
- **The Defining Bargain:** accept human protection that changes Sídhe identity, or refuse and risk annihilation.

Opening Situations

1. **A Court Splits**
   Bright and Twilight factions threaten separation.

- Twist: the split is being nudged by Fomorian fear-work.

2. **The Heir Vanishes**
   A key figure disappears on a Hollow Way.

- Twist: they returned—but wrong.

3. **The Treaty Offer**
   A human king offers formal protection.

- Twist: it requires inspection rights and iron "security," a poison pill.

4. **The Relic Awakens**
   An old witness relic begins reacting, as if warning you.

- Twist: it will draw attention if used, but may be necessary.

Opening Session Blueprints

Below are ready-to-run opening sequences. Each is written to produce immediate momentum, a personal stake, and a clear "next problem" without needing extensive prep.

Blueprint 1: The Feast That Breaks

Start: Autumn feast, crowded hall, warmth, fragile hope.
Inciting event: a guest violates hospitality—iron token discovered, or a "gift" smells of brine.
Immediate choices:

- expose the violation publicly (risk fracture)
- hide it and investigate quietly (risk rot)
- eject the guest (risk turning them into an enemy)
  End of session: the sanctuary's threshold behaves oddly; someone reports hounds seen at the ridge.

Blueprint 2: Refuge at the Door

Start: storm night, pounding on the threshold, exhausted refugees.
Inciting event: the refugees are followed—tracks, omen, or

a watcher in the trees.
Immediate choices:

- take them in and risk everything
- send them onward and risk their deaths
- split the group (morally ugly, strategically plausible)
  End: a child speaks a name wrong; Wellspring omen indicates a blight token is among the group.

Blueprint 3: The Bell Claim

Start: dawn, bell rings across the valley, sanctuary feels thinner.
Inciting event: a Moundborn scout confirms the bell will be consecrated tomorrow.
Immediate choices:

- sabotage the bell (risk human wrath)
- bargain with the priest (risk being mapped)
- redirect attention elsewhere (risk not solving root problem)
  End: you find a nail-cart near a sacred ford—proof this isn't innocent.

Blueprint 4: Hollow Way Misstep

Start: the Protagonist escorting someone through a route.
Inciting event: the path turns wrong; time stutters; you emerge near a coastal cave.
Immediate choices:

- retreat and lose your mission
- push forward and risk losing time or memory
- rescue captives you weren't meant to find
  End: a Fomorian token offers "safe return" for a name.

Campaign Twists to Keep It Fresh

Use these twists when a frame starts feeling predictable.

- **The enemy is right (in one narrow way):** a human lord is genuinely trying to prevent famine, and your sabotage will kill innocents unless you find another way.
- **The ally is compromised:** a beloved safehouse keeper is being blackmailed by iron-hunters.
- **The sanctuary has its own agenda:** a hall guardian refuses entry to refugees due to old terms.
- **A Fir Bolg clan becomes family:** you save someone, and now stone-right politics is personal.
- **The Protagonist becomes a symbol:** rumors about you spread—helpful and dangerous.
- **A relic wants use:** an artifact "reacts" to threats and tempts desperate choices.
- **Winter changes everything:** travel becomes impossible, forcing a bottle-episode pressure cooker.

Director Guidance: Making It Personal

One-on-One play thrives when the campaign isn't "save the Sídhe" in abstract terms—it's **save your people**, meaning specific faces and places.

Before Session 1, choose or create:

- one sanctuary the Protagonist cares about (even if they're traveling)
- three NPC anchors:
  - one mentor who expects something from them
  - one peer/rival who challenges their choices
  - one vulnerable person who makes stakes emotional
- one recurring external threat (Eadric Nailhand, Abbot Ciarán, Grey Widow, Cenn Fódla, Jarl Hrafn, etc.)
- one personal vow or taboo that will be tested by necessity

Then let the seasons squeeze.

Suggested Campaign Structures

If you want a clean, satisfying arc, use one of these structures:

Structure 1: Three-Season Arc (Fast Campaign)

- **Spring:** discovery + first threat + first bargain
- **Summer:** escalation + pursuit + first major loss or victory
- **Autumn:** counting feast + defining choice + consequences

Structure 2: Full Year Arc (Classic Campaign)

- **Spring:** doors open, threats approach
- **Summer:** loud world, raids and bargains
- **Autumn:** accounting, feasts, hard decisions
- **Winter:** survival test, internal fracture, final stand or relocation

Structure 3: Sanctuary Trilogy (Modular)

- **Arc 1:** defend one sanctuary
- **Arc 2:** lose or relocate it; build a network
- **Arc 3:** reclaim a place or found a new court

BOOK 0 — CHAPTER 10

Notable NPCs & Rival Courts

In Éire, power rarely marches in neat armies. It moves in whispers, in tokens passed hand to hand, in oaths spoken at wells, in hunger that turns a village into a weapon, in a road laid one stone at a time. The Sídhe cannot afford to treat the world as a board game. They must treat it as a web of people—each with needs, loyalties, and contradictions.

This chapter provides a cast of notable NPCs and courts designed to do three things for Directors:

1. **Personalize the war.** The Protagonist is not fighting "humans" or "Fomorians." They are navigating the choices of specific individuals.
2. **Create recurring pressure.** Each NPC has a reason to return—by obsession, duty, hunger, or love.
3. **Offer complicated alliances.** Many of the most useful allies are also dangerous.

Use these NPCs as-is or as templates. Rename freely. Change details to match your region of Éire. What matters is function: each character should pull on the Protagonist's story in a distinct way.

Notable Sídhe Figures

A. Court-Sídhe: The Oath-Bound

Ailbhe of the White Torc

Lineage: Court-Sídhe (Bright Court)

Role: Herald, witness-keeper, sanctioner

Ailbhe speaks like a blade—clean and unemotional. She believes the Sídhe will not survive unless their law survives, and she is willing to be disliked to make that true. Her white torc is not just regalia; it is a portable declaration that she speaks in the presence of witness whether others accept it or not.

What she wants:

A unified court that can enforce guest-right and punish betrayal. She seeks to formalize alliances with Fir Bolg clans and "tame" Hostborn raids into strategy.

What makes her dangerous:

Ailbhe can justify cruelty as necessity. She believes mercy is a luxury best used strategically. If she decides the Protagonist is an asset, she will attempt to bind them with duty.

How she complicates campaigns:

- offers protection in exchange for obedience
- demands public sanction of an ally to preserve legitimacy
- proposes a treaty with a human lord that tastes like slow surrender

Director note:

Ailbhe is ideal as a patron who becomes a moral test: she can be right and still terrifying.

Donnán of the Ashen Lanterns

Lineage: Court-Sídhe (Twilight Court)
Role: Bargain-maker, coalition builder, political survivor
Donnán is charming in the way a fox is charming. He believes adaptation is the only path through the Fading. He trades in favors and ugly necessities. He knows which human lords can be bribed, which priests can be softened, which Fir Bolg chiefs can be flattered, and which Hostborn captains can be redirected.

What he wants:
Time. A breathing space. A coalition that survives winter even if it offends old dignity.

What makes him dangerous:
He lies elegantly, and he can convince himself that the lie is kindness. He may sacrifice smaller sanctuaries to protect larger ones.

How he complicates campaigns:

- offers a "safe route" that requires compromising hospitality
- proposes using a Fomorian bargain against another Fomorian strain
- attempts to recruit the Protagonist into Twilight politics by flattering their "pragmatism"

Director note:
Use Donnán when you want "the least bad option" to still feel like poison.

B. Moundborn: The Hidden Folk

Niamh Bracken-Veil

Lineage: Moundborn
Role: Hillwarden, veilwright, sanctuary architect
Niamh believes secrecy is a sacred duty, but she is not timid. She is the kind of person who will calmly lead an iron-hunter band in circles until they doubt their own competence—then invite them to camp somewhere else without them realizing they were guided.

What she wants:
To preserve a chain of hidden halls that form the backbone of refuge movement in her region. She wants to keep the old stories alive without making them loud.

What makes her dangerous:
Niamh sees people as risks. She can become cold, even to those she loves, if she believes they threaten the veil.

How she complicates campaigns:

- refuses to shelter refugees unless the Protagonist meets strict conditions
- insists on relocating a sanctuary that others want to defend
- suspects Court-Sídhe politics will expose everything and may sabotage negotiations

Director note:
Niamh is a perfect "ally who blocks you." She's often right, and that's the problem.

Fionnán Knot-Maker

Lineage: Moundborn
Role: Tokenmaker, pathkeeper, keeper of coded cords
Fionnán is gentle, humorous, and looks harmless. He makes cords, pins, and knots that carry meaning. Many sanctuaries in his region literally rely on his craft—lintel cords, memory anchors, and route-keys.

What he wants:
To keep the infrastructure functioning. Fionnán believes the war is won by logistics, not heroics.

What makes him dangerous:
If his loyalty shifts, entire networks collapse. He also knows where everyone hides.

How he complicates campaigns:

- his kidnapping becomes a crisis
- his refusal to provide route-keys forces the Protagonist into risky alternatives
- someone claims Fionnán is compromised; proving or disproving it becomes a mystery arc

Director note:
Use Fionnán as "the quiet lynchpin" everyone underestimates until he's gone.

C. Hostborn: The Fair Host's Kin

Fiachra Gale-Spear

Lineage: Hostborn
Role: Huntleader, strike strategist, refugee escort commander
Fiachra speaks plainly and moves like a storm. He believes hesitation is death. He is protective of refugees but ruthless toward threats, and he has little patience for court etiquette.

What he wants:
To break the iron-hunter infrastructure: kill leaders, burn nail carts, disrupt supply lines, destroy forges. He believes diplomacy should exist only to support action.

What makes him dangerous:
Fiachra attracts reprisal. His raids can endanger hearth networks. He may treat collateral damage as an acceptable cost.

How he complicates campaigns:

- demands the Protagonist join a raid instead of defending a sanctuary
- insists a suspected informant must die
- refuses to respect a treaty if he believes it weakens survival chances

Director note:
Fiachra is the "necessary violence" NPC. He can be hero, villain, or both in the same scene.

Sadhbh Wind-Thread

Lineage: Hostborn
Role: Corridor runner, Hollow Way scout, refugee guide
Sadhbh is fast, brave, and quietly compassionate. She carries messages and people through routes others fear. She knows how to talk to frightened children, and she knows how to kill when necessary.

What she wants:
To keep the refuge network alive. She believes individuals matter more than ideology.

What makes her dangerous:
She will break a rule if a life is at stake, which can destabilize witness structures. She also has a habit of making promises she cannot always keep.

How she complicates campaigns:

- arrives at the Protagonist's sanctuary with refugees and no warning
- begs for help rescuing someone from a compromised Hollow Way
- becomes a target for iron-hunters who have mapped her routes

Director note:
Use Sadhbh as the NPC who turns abstract war into a face the Protagonist cannot ignore.

D. Wellspring: Water Memory and Omen

Siofra of Lough Glass

Lineage: Wellspring Sídhe
Role: Water-witness, omen reader, keeper of names
Siofra is calm in a way that unsettles. She speaks gently, but her eyes feel like deep water. She remembers what people wish forgotten—not to punish, necessarily, but because memory is her duty.

What she wants:
To preserve witness networks: wells, fords, bowls, and stories. She believes the Sídhe die when the island forgets them.

What makes her dangerous:
She can weaponize truth. She can reveal secrets at the worst moment "for the good of the people."

How she complicates campaigns:

- delivers an omen that forces immediate choice
- insists the Protagonist must make an offering or suffer consequences
- claims a beloved elder is the source of a rotting breach

Director note:
Siofra is excellent as the "oracle" who never gives clean answers—because clean answers do not exist.

Cormac Reed-Mirror

Lineage: Wellspring Sídhe
Role: Mistworker, spirit negotiator, blight investigator
Cormac is younger than Siofra and more openly emotional. He has seen blight destroy safehouses and is obsessed with prevention. He can be reckless, pushing into spoiled wells and wrong reflections.

What he wants:
To identify and uproot Fomorian rot early. To understand how human pollution and sanctification interact with witness.

What makes him dangerous:
His obsession makes him manipulable. He may accept "help" from questionable sources if it promises insight.

How he complicates campaigns:

- drags the Protagonist into investigations that risk exposure
- accuses someone innocent due to pattern-paranoia
- brings evidence that implicates a powerful court figure

Director note:
Cormac is a perfect "ally who might ruin everything by trying to do the right thing."

E. Hearthbound: The Keepers of Inside

Rua Hearth-Thread

Lineage: Hearthbound
Role: Matron of moving refuges, ward-steward, ration commander
Rua is not noble, not mystical, and not polite when she doesn't have time for it. She has fed refugees through winters that broke stronger halls. She believes warmth is sacred and that anyone endangering it deserves consequences.

What she wants:
To keep the Nine Lintels refuge network functioning. She wants discipline, cooperation, and hard choices made early rather than late.

What makes her dangerous:
Rua's pragmatism can become ruthless. She may turn people away to protect the network.

How she complicates campaigns:

- demands the Protagonist escort a refugee group instead of chasing glory
- refuses to shelter a powerful court figure who endangered safehouses
- hides information to prevent panic, creating future betrayal feelings

Director note:
Rua is the "survival mother." Make the Protagonist earn her respect—or suffer her judgment.

Eimear Ash-Salt

Lineage: Hearthbound
Role: Charm-crafter, threshold healer, domestic curse-breaker
Eimear is the one who finds the brine-needle fetish under the bed and doesn't scream. She's the one who knows which herb calms fear and which words should never be spoken in a crowded hall.

What she wants:
Quiet stability. She wants the Sídhe to stop turning every problem into politics and remember that people must sleep.

What makes her dangerous:
She knows everyone's weaknesses. She can manipulate through care—by deciding who gets comfort and who doesn't.

How she complicates campaigns:

- warns the Protagonist that their presence is attracting tells
- insists on uncomfortable domestic rules that the Protagonist may resent
- becomes the first to suspect rot, creating paranoia tension

Director note:
Eimear is perfect for intimate horror arcs: nightmares, slow rot, and the dread of losing "inside."

F. Beastmarked: Totem and Wild

Bran Antlered

Lineage: Beastmarked (Stag line)
Role: Wild corridor guardian, geis-bound defender
Bran is quiet, huge, and gentle until threatened. His geis prevents him from refusing defense of certain glades. He treats the land like family.

What he wants:
To keep wild corridors intact so sanctuaries can move and survive. He believes the Sídhe must remain connected to wilderness or become ghosts.

What makes him dangerous:
His geis can force action at terrible times. He may drag others into a fight they would rather avoid.

How he complicates campaigns:

- demands help defending a glade even when the Protagonist has other priorities
- refuses to compromise with humans who cut hawthorn, escalating conflict
- becomes a tragic figure if forced to break his geis or watch a sanctuary fall

Director note:
Bran is your "noble monster" ally: powerful, admirable, and bound by rules that can ruin plans.

Muirenn Crow-Shoulder

Lineage: Beastmarked (Raven line)
Role: Scout, omen-hunter, battlefield watcher
Muirenn laughs at fear and refuses to explain herself. She appears at bad moments like a crow landing on a fresh corpse. She's drawn to battlefields, curses, and omen storms.

What she wants:
To keep the Morrígan's attention pointed at the Sídhe rather than against them—if that attention is even a thing one can "steer."

What makes her dangerous:
She treats suffering like information. She can be emotionally brutal, pressing the Protagonist to face hard truths.

How she complicates campaigns:

- insists the Protagonist must witness something horrific to understand the pattern
- brings news of betrayal that may or may not be true
- tempts the Protagonist into Beastpact reliance that risks identity drift

Director note:
Muirenn is ideal as an omen messenger who never arrives with comfort.

Rival Sídhe Courts and Coalitions

These are not "nations." They are gatherings of sanctuaries, lineages, and patron figures tied to geography and ideology.

A. The Bright Court of Uisneach

Identity: Continuity, dignity, strict witness-law
Public face: Ailbhe of the White Torc
The Bright Court insists the Sídhe cannot survive by becoming smaller and quieter forever. They hold formal councils at witness stones, maintain rigid hospitality structures, and punish breaches harshly.

Strengths: legitimacy, formal alliances, strong oath infrastructure
Weaknesses: visibility, rigidity, political arrogance
Rivalries: Twilight Court pragmatists; Hostborn raiders who threaten treaties
Director use: This court is a patron that offers resources—at the cost of control.

B. The Twilight Court of Ashen Lanterns

Identity: Adaptation, coalition, "ugly survival" bargains
Public face: Donnán of the Ashen Lanterns
The Twilight Court works with whoever can be worked with. They accept compromise and sometimes make deals that make others sick. They thrive on networks and quiet influence.

Strengths: flexibility, intelligence, covert alliances
Weaknesses: mistrust, moral corrosion, risk of rot bargains
Rivalries: Bright Court traditionalists; Wellspring purists

Director use: This court is temptation: it offers solutions that feel like poison.

C. The Nine Lintels Refuge Network

Identity: Domestic survival, moving sanctuary infrastructure
Public face: Rua Hearth-Thread
Not a court in the noble sense—more like a living organism of safehouses and mobile thresholds. It saves lives. It also demands discipline.

Strengths: logistics, morale management, practical protection
Weaknesses: resource strain, vulnerability to infiltration
Rivalries: none formally—everyone needs them, everyone resents their rules
Director use: This network is the beating heart of refugee campaigns.

D. The Hawk-Thread Flight Coalition

Identity: Mobility, strike response, corridor control
Public face: Fiachra Gale-Spear (informal)
A coalition of Hostborn flights and allied scouts. They run refugees, sabotage threats, and maintain route knowledge.

Strengths: speed, tactical competence, courage
Weaknesses: reprisal magnet, strained diplomacy
Rivalries: human lords and iron-hunters; sometimes Bright Court
Director use: This coalition creates action arcs and hard moral calls.

E. The Glasswell Covenant

Identity: Memory preservation, omen authority, blight prevention
Public face: Siofra of Lough Glass
A Wellspring-centered coalition guarding sacred water sites and witness networks. They keep records (spoken, tokened, reflected) and warn courts when rot patterns emerge.

Strengths: information, spiritual legitimacy, early warning
Weaknesses: slow deliberation, grief weight, internal secrecy
Rivalries: anyone who pollutes wells—human or Sídhe
Director use: This covenant drives mystery arcs and forces truth into politics.

F. The Antler Crown Glades

Identity: Wild corridor sovereignty, pact law, territorial defense
Public face: Bran Antlered (one of several)
A loose coalition of Beastmarked totem lines guarding key wild corridors. They don't care about court regalia. They care about land behavior.

Strengths: wilderness advantage, pact power, ferocious guardianship
Weaknesses: unpredictable, taboo-driven, hard to negotiate with
Rivalries: settlers, hunters, anyone cutting hawthorn
Director use: Use them when you want "nature politics" and geis-driven dilemmas.

Fir Bolg Figures and Factions

Fir Bolg are not a monolith. Present them with internal conflict, old grief, and the possibility of harsh alliance.

Cenn Fódla "Stonehand"

Role: Warband chief, stone-right enforcer
Stonehand's patience ended decades ago. He respects courage and competence, not courtesy. He may ally with Sídhe against humans—but expects recognition of Fir Bolg claims, publicly.

Use him for: territory negotiations, border war frames, hostage arcs
Twist: he secretly fears Fomorian rot more than humans and will do brutal things to prevent it.

Bríde of the Bog Spears

Role: Wetland scout-captain, ambush specialist
Bríde understands layered routes better than most Fir Bolg, which makes her dangerous and valuable. She can guide the Protagonist through reeds no human patrol can follow—if trust is earned.

Use her for: uneasy alliances, escort missions, double-cross tension
Twist: her clan is split; half want alliance, half want revenge on Sídhe.

Eóin Cairn-Tally

Role: Grudge-keeper, cairn-code master, rumor weapon
Eóin is an antagonist who fights with stories and markers rather than blades. He spreads rumor to humans, blocks corridors, and treats Sídhe suffering as deserved payment.

Use him for: sabotage arcs, misdirection wars, moral tests
Twist: he has a personal reason—his family died because a Sídhe court broke a bargain long ago.

Fomorian Entities and Agents

Fomorians are best run as personalities of corruption rather than generic monsters.

The Grey Widow of Loch Scáth

Role: Bargain-maker, reflection predator, grief merchant
She offers help that binds. She trades in names, regrets, and fear. Her "gifts" seem gentle until you realize they are hooks. She can be a campaign-long antagonist whose presence is felt through nightmares, wrong reflections, and poisoned hospitality.

Use her for: blight investigations, moral temptation arcs, slow horror
Twist: she keeps bargains—perfectly. The terror is that the bargain was always a trap.

The Black Kelp Crown

Role: Coastal brood regalia, storm-anchor, brine corruption node
Whether it is a single entity or a title passed between brood leaders depends on your campaign. It represents storm raids, spoiled fisheries, and brine gifts that turn communities against themselves.

Use it for: coastal storm war frames, hostage rescues, "gift" corruption arcs
Twist: it can bribe humans into becoming agents, creating enemies that are familiar faces.

Muirgen Deep-Tusk

Role: Bone champion, raid lord, fear engine
A brutal presence used when the campaign needs overt threat. Deep-Tusk is what happens when corruption stops pretending to be subtle.

Use him for: direct confrontations, siege breaks, rescue missions
Twist: he loves trophies—tokens, torcs, hearthstones—making him a plot engine for retrieval arcs.

Human Power Figures

Treat human NPCs as layered—capable of kindness and cruelty—because that makes bargains painful.

Eadric Nailhand

Role: Iron-hunter captain, pragmatic predator
Eadric isn't a frothing zealot. He's a professional. He learns. He adapts. He treats the unseen as a problem to solve.

Use him for: recurring pursuit, siege pressure, "hunter becomes nemesis" arcs
Twist: he may offer the Protagonist a bargain: betray a court, and he spares a sanctuary—temporarily.

Abbot Ciarán of the Nine Psalms

Role: Sanctifier, record-keeper, ideological threat
Ciarán believes he is saving the world from dangerous ambiguity. He replaces wells' old stories with new ones and calls it mercy.

Use him for: bell/threshold conflicts, renaming wars, propaganda pressure
Twist: he protects peasants from raiders and famine, forcing the Protagonist to grapple with his real value.

Lady Mórainn of the River March

Role: Border lord, political opportunist
A noble whose lands sit near thin places. She sees value in controlling what she cannot fully understand.

Use her for: diplomacy frames, hostage arcs, corridor bargaining
Twist: she might be the most reliable human ally—if you accept the cost of being "managed."

Relationship Web Starters

Use these to quickly entangle the Protagonist:

- Rua Hearth-Thread despises Donnán's compromises but needs his routes.
- Ailbhe trusts Siofra's witness but fears her secrets.
- Fiachra respects Bran's courage but thinks his geis makes him unreliable.
- Niamh suspects someone in the Glasswell Covenant is compromised.
- Bríde owes Sadhbh Wind-Thread a life-debt that could trigger alliance.
- Eadric Nailhand has a personal grudge against the Protagonist's mentor.
- The Grey Widow once offered help to a Court-Sídhe elder—an unspoken stain.

Using NPCs in One-on-One Play

To keep NPCs effective in a duet campaign:

- Keep **3–5 recurring NPCs** in rotation: mentor, rival, ally, antagonist, wildcard.
- Give each NPC a **simple pressure move** they repeat:
    - Ailbhe: "bind you with duty"
    - Donnán: "offer poison solutions"
    - Rua: "force domestic triage"
    - Fiachra: "demand decisive violence"
    - Siofra: "deliver truth that hurts"
    - Eadric: "tighten the net"
    - Grey Widow: "offer bargains in grief"
- Let NPCs **change** with seasons. Desperation reshapes everyone.

Closing: Rival Courts Are Mirrors

The Sídhe are not fighting only external enemies. They are fighting the temptation to become less themselves. Rival courts and notable NPCs are the mirrors in which that temptation becomes visible:

- dignity vs survival
- secrecy vs solidarity
- law vs mercy
- action vs restraint
- memory vs grief
- wild freedom vs domestic stability

If you keep these tensions alive through NPCs, your campaign will feel like Éire—layered, pressured, and heartbreakingly human, even when no humans are in the room.

BOOK 0 — CHAPTER 11

Director Toolkit: Running The Fading

Running *The Fading* is less about inventing plots and more about **maintaining pressures**. The setting already contains engines that create story: sanctuaries under threat, routes collapsing, oaths binding, wells remembering, iron hardening the world, and the Sídhe struggling not to become strangers to themselves.

Your job as Director is to make those engines personal for one Protagonist.

This chapter gives you tools to do that—how to establish tone, how to frame scenes, how to escalate through seasons, how to use NPCs as pressure points, and how to keep the campaign distinct from traditional fantasy. It also offers a "Director's rhythm" designed for duet play: one Protagonist, one Director, and a world that pushes back in intimate ways.

The Director's North Star

What This Setting Is Actually About

At its core, *The Fading* is about:

- **Belonging under siege:** the Protagonist trying to keep a people and a place real
- **Identity as resource:** names, memories, and sanctuaries as vital as food
- **Power through relationship:** witness, etiquette, oaths, and offerings shaping outcomes
- **Survival with moral cost:** choices that save lives but stain the soul
- **A world that responds:** the land remembers; the enemy adapts; consequences stick

When you're unsure what to do next as Director, ask:

"What is being threatened right now: the Protagonist's sanctuary, their name, their relationships, or their people's continuity?"
Then apply pressure to that element in a way that feels true to Éire.

Tone: What the Table Should Feel Like

This setting is not "grimdark." It is **beautiful pressure**—warmth surrounded by cold, music surrounded by silence, hospitality surrounded by danger.

Aim for these tone ingredients:

1) Tenderness in the Middle of Threat

The Protagonist should regularly experience moments that make the struggle worth it:

- a child sleeping safely because the hearth holds
- a tiny feast in a ruined place
- a story told with laughter despite hunger
- an elder teaching a courtesy phrase like it's a blessing

Without tenderness, the campaign becomes despair. With it, the campaign becomes *meaningful*.

2) Subtlety with Sharp Teeth

Magick and conflict should often be indirect:

- misdirection instead of explosions
- bargains instead of duels

- a nail in a lintel instead of a siege engine
- a rumor that turns a village hostile

But when violence happens, it should matter. Make it fast, costly, and memorable.

3) The Island as Presence

Éire should feel like a character:

- fog that arrives like a decision
- wells that taste wrong when lies are told
- standing stones that "witness" without being sentimental
- hawthorn groves that feel like boundary guardians

Describe nature with intent. Not floridly—*meaningfully*.

4) Beauty That Can Be Weaponized

A feast can be a trap. A gift can be poison. A song can be propaganda. A pretty token can be a binding hook.

Teach the Protagonist early: in this world, beauty and danger are often braided.

One-on-One Structure: Why Duet Play Works Here

One-on-One campaigns thrive on intimacy. *The Fading* thrives on intimacy. The match is natural.

Your Protagonist Should Be Central by Design

They are not "one of many heroes." They are:

- the runner who knows the routes
- the envoy who holds the bargain together
- the hearth-keeper who keeps children sleeping
- the witness who can name betrayal
- the scout who sees the net tightening

Keep the camera close. Let major setting events arrive through the Protagonist's direct experience:

- someone begs at their threshold
- a rival confronts them in a hall
- a hunter follows their tracks
- an omen addresses them personally

Use NPCs as "Hands on the Protagonist"

In group play, PCs create friction with each other. In duet play, NPCs provide the push-and-pull:

- mentor who demands duty
- rival who tempts compromise
- ally who needs rescue
- antagonist who tightens pressure
- wildcard who offers bargains

Rotate 3–5 NPCs frequently rather than introducing dozens at once.

The Scene Palette

The Eight Scene Types That Make the Setting Feel Right

To keep your campaign from drifting into generic fantasy, use these scene types often. They create the setting's signature rhythm.

1) Threshold Scenes

A door, a ford, a gate, a hawthorn gap—some boundary is being tested.

- Who is allowed in?
- Under what terms?
- What happens if those terms are violated?

Examples: refugees arrive; a suspicious gift sits on the step; someone tries to bring iron inside.

2) Feast Scenes

Not always a full banquet—sometimes a small meal. Feasts are politics, morale, identity maintenance.

- Who sits where?
- Who speaks?
- What token is offered?

- What story is told—and why?

Examples: autumn counting feast; winter quiet hall; celebratory meal after a successful escort.

3) Oath & Bargain Scenes

Language becomes a lever. Witness matters.

- Who benefits?
- Who pays later?
- What is the hidden clause?

Examples: negotiate passage through Fir Bolg land; bargain with a human lord; bind a sanctuary's guest-right.

4) Route Scenes

Movement under threat. The world is narrow and urgent.

- Which path is safe?
- Who is too slow?
- What do you leave behind?

Examples: escorting elders; crossing a ford while hounds sniff nearby; Hollow Way travel with time risk.

5) Investigation Scenes

Rot is subtle. Truth is contested.

- What is the tell?
- Who is lying?
- Is the problem external or internal?

Examples: bitter well; recurring nightmares; missing tokens; suspicious behavior in the hall.

6) Confrontation Scenes

Not always combat. Often social, sometimes violent.

- a rival calls you out
- a hunter corners you
- a Fir Bolg warband demands tribute
- a Fomorian emissary offers a gift

7) Sanctuary Maintenance Scenes

These are "quiet stakes" scenes—repair, rationing, tending wounds, teaching children.

They make the world feel lived in and give consequences a home.

8) Omen & Memory Scenes

A reflection shows intent. A well tastes grief. A crow gathers. These scenes foreshadow pressure and deepen mystique.

Building Pressure Webs

How to Make Threats Feel Alive Without Plot-Rails

Instead of writing a linear story, build a **pressure web**: 3–5 active forces that each move on their own.

A good pressure web includes:

- **one external hunter force** (iron-hunters, sanctifiers, raiders)
- **one corruption force** (Fomorian token network, nightmare strain)
- **one territorial force** (Fir Bolg claim, corridor dispute)
- **one internal fracture** (court split, refugee tension, old grievance)
- **one fragile resource** (food stores, route stability, a key NPC, a relic)

How to Run the Web

At the start of a session, decide:

- which two pressures advance in the background
- which one pressure appears directly in a scene
- which one pressure is foreshadowed subtly

This keeps the world moving without making the Protagonist feel railroaded. If they ignore a pressure, it worsens. If they address it, something else advances.

Director principle:
Pressure should never punish curiosity—pressure should reward engagement and punish neglect.

Seasons as Narrative Escalation

You don't need "season rules" here. You need **season meaning**.

Spring: Doors and Danger

- routes reopen
- human expansion begins
- sanctuaries repair and renew
  Director move: introduce a new threat quietly (a camp, a bell plan, a road line).

Summer: The Loud Net

- patrols, markets, raids
- attention and rumor spread
  Director move: tighten pursuit, force movement, create public consequences.

Autumn: Counting and Choice

- resources are evaluated
- feasts decide refuge distribution
  Director move: demand a hard decision with moral weight.

Winter: Hearth and Despair

- travel becomes limited
- internal tension spikes
- nightmares thrive
  Director move: bottle the story in a sanctuary and test hospitality.

Simple pacing tip:
If your campaign feels like it's wandering, announce the season change in-fiction with sensory cues—then let the season reshape priorities.

Making Magick Feel Original at the Table

You already have Schools of magick. Your job in Book 0 play is to make them feel distinct from "spellcasting."

Describe Workings as Etiquette, Not Explosions

A glamour isn't "casting invisibility." It's:

- adjusting attention
- persuading the mind to accept a plausible interpretation
- letting a doorway forget it is a doorway

An oath isn't "binding magic." It's:

- terms spoken with witness
- a consequence structure that snaps when breached

A Hollow Way isn't teleportation. It's:

- finding the seam
- approaching correctly
- paying a respectful cost

Use "Tells" as Drama, Not Punishment

A tell is not a penalty. It's a story hook:

- a hound catches a scent
- a crow follows you
- a priest feels "uneasy" near a place
- villagers start whispering

Make tells produce *new scenes*, not "you lose."

Keep Harmful Magick Rare and Specific

When violence happens through magick, it should feel like:

- a curse that weakens a hunter's resolve
- a mist that makes arrows miss
- a pact-driven beast strike
- an oath-sanction snapping someone's luck at the worst time

Save overt "attack magic" for rare moments of desperation.

Running Social Conflict Like Combat

In this setting, the most important battles happen over:

- sanctuary access
- passage rights

- hostage exchanges
- treaties
- accusations of betrayal
- whether to shelter refugees

To make social scenes tense:

- **set a stake clearly** ("If you fail, the corridor closes," "If you succeed, the refugees are sheltered... but at a cost.")
- **give the NPC a motive** that isn't simply "yes/no"
- **introduce a witness** (hearth, well, third party) to sharpen consequences
- **use tokens** as bargaining chips—objects that carry meaning
- **let partial outcomes reshape relationships** rather than ending scenes cleanly

A social "win" should often come with a lingering hook.

Director Moves: The Setting's Signature Pushes

When you need to advance the story, choose one of these moves.

1) Mark the Threshold

Place an object, sign, or boundary marker that changes the situation:

- an iron nail
- a salt line
- a cairn marker
- a bell plan
- a brine gift

2) Offer Hospitality Under Stress

Present someone who needs shelter now:

- refugees
- a wounded enemy
- a compromised ally
- a child with a dangerous secret

3) Reveal a Cost Hidden in Success

The Protagonist succeeds... and:

- a tell is left
- a token is damaged
- a bargain binds them further
- a rival takes credit
- a sanctuary becomes strained

4) Turn the Ally

Not necessarily betrayal—compromise:

- an ally is blackmailed
- an ally accepts a bad bargain
- an ally chooses survival over principle

5) Spoil the Witness

A well tastes wrong. A hearth feels cold. A stone cracks. Memory becomes unreliable.
Now the Protagonist must act before community panic spreads.

6) Force the Counting

Demand a resource decision:

- food for winter
- refuge allocation
- which sanctuary to abandon
- which route to risk
- which NPC to save

7) Bring the Season's Knife

Let the season change what's possible:

- winter traps you
- summer makes secrecy fail
- spring opens an enemy route
- autumn makes everyone desperate

Keeping Stakes Human-Sized

Even if the campaign is epic, keep scenes anchored in the small:

- a bowl of food
- a child's nightmare
- a torn cloak repaired with cord
- a token passed between trembling fingers
- a name spoken correctly in the dark

These details make the setting believable and make losses hurt.

Quick Start: Three Ways to Begin

If you want to start immediately with minimal prep, pick one.

Start A: The Compromised Feast

A feast is underway. A gift is discovered. Hospitality is threatened. The Protagonist must choose whether to expose, conceal, or expel—while hounds are seen on the ridge.

Start B: The Refuge Run

The Protagonist escorts refugees. A route fails. Time stutters. They emerge near a dangerous place with captives in need. The choice splits mission from morality.

Start C: The Bell Claim

A bell is being built near a thin place. The Protagonist has one day to stop its consecration—through sabotage, bargain, or misdirection.

Common Pitfalls (and How to Avoid Them)

Pitfall 1: Making Everything a Secret

If every scene is whispery mystery, the campaign becomes monotone.
Fix: alternate quiet tension with clear action—escorts, confrontations, raids, public accusations.

Pitfall 2: Making Humans One-Note Villains

The setting is stronger when humans can be sympathetic.
Fix: give at least one human NPC a genuine good motive (famine relief, protecting villagers) that conflicts with Sídhe survival.

Pitfall 3: Overusing Fomorians as Generic Monsters

Fomorians should feel like corruption and bargain poison.
Fix: use tokens, nightmares, and hospitality traps more than brute fights.

Pitfall 4: Turning the Fading into Hopelessness

Hopeless campaigns end early.
Fix: ensure every session contains one moment of warmth or beauty the Protagonist protected.

Director's Closing Advice

Run Éire like a living place with rules, not like a dungeon with rooms.

Let sanctuaries feel warm. Let threats feel inevitable. Let bargains feel sharp. Let tokens matter. Let the Protagonist's choices echo through seasons.

If you do that, the campaign will generate itself—because the setting is built to do what the Sídhe do best:

Survive by refusing to be forgotten.

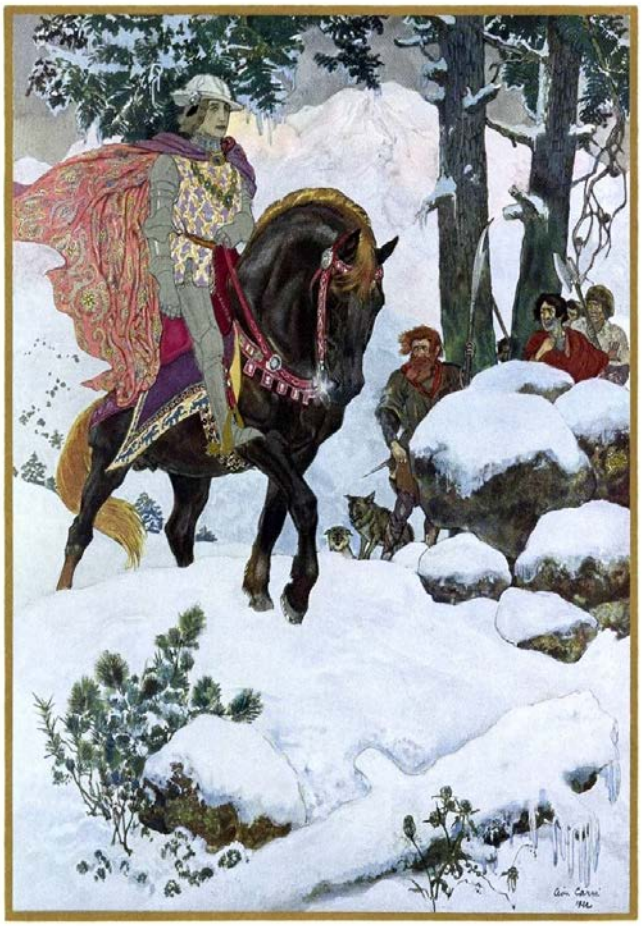
THE FADING — BOOK 1: PLAY RULES FOR ÉIRE

CHAPTER 1: CREATE YOUR SÍDHE PROTAGONIST

This chapter walks you through building a Protagonist for *The Fading* using the **core One-on-One RPG rules** plus this module's **setting overlays**. You will still resolve uncertain actions with the One-on-One engine (d100 skill rolls, modified skill value, Advantages/Disadvantages, and Destiny). What changes here is **how your starting skills are built**, how **Essence** is recorded for magick, and how your **Lineage** defines innate power.

What this module adds (without changing the core engine)

- **Six Lineages** function as your "archetype" (each has a predetermined suite of innate abilities).
- **Essence**: a personal power pool used for Sídhe Magick workings (details in the Magick chapters).
- **Skill Bases**: every skill begins with a base value derived from its linked Primary Attribute.
- **Sídhe Magick**: a single skill that covers **General Fae Magick** and **one** chosen School of Magick (only one School per character).



What this module does *not* change

- The **resolution method** (d100 rolls with modified skill value, using Advantages/Disadvantages and Destiny).
- Your action structure and the core consequences framework (see Part II synopses).
- The Director's use of long-term pressures (including **Clocks**, referenced later in Part II).

Before You Start: What You'll Write on the Sheet

You will end character creation with:

- A chosen **Lineage** (Court-Sídhe, Moundborn, Hostborn, Wellspring Sídhe, Hearthbound, Beastmarked)
- The six **Primary Attributes**: Might (MGT), Grace (GRC), Endurance (END), Awareness (AWR), Intellect (INT), Presence (PRE)
- An **Essence** maximum and current Essence (starts full)
- A list of **Skills** with final starting percentages (including **Sídhe Magick** if you invest in it)
- Your starting **Destiny** (from One-on-One core)
- A few defining story anchors (sanctuary tie, vow/taboo, key relationship, and a "tell")
- Optional: a **Companion** (or a note to select one from Appendix E)

STEP 1 — Choose Your Lineage (Your Archetype)

In *The Fading*, your Lineage is the closest thing to a "class." It determines:

- your cultural role and typical responsibilities among the Sídhe
- your common appearance traits and social expectations
- your **predetermined innate abilities** (no selection—your Lineage defines them)

Choose one:

Court-Sídhe

Witness-law, diplomacy, sanction, treaties, the hard politics of survival.

Moundborn

Veil-keeping, hidden hall craft, misdirection, secrecy as infrastructure.

Hostborn

Flights, runners, corridor defense, strike actions, escort work under pressure.

Wellspring Sídhe

Water memory, omens, reflection, spirit-parley, sensing rot before it spreads.

Hearthbound

Refuge craft, warded domestic survival, healing and morale, keeping "inside" intact.

Beastmarked

Totem ties, wild corridors, heightened senses, animal-form mysteries and pact duties.

Write your Lineage name at the top of your sheet. You will add its innate abilities later as a fixed list (your Lineage chapter provides the exact suite).

> **Important:** Lineage innates are **not purchased** and are **not chosen**. They are part of who you are. They cost **no Essence** to use, but each attempt requires a **Main action**.

STEP 2 — Generate Your Primary Attributes

Your Primary Attributes are the foundation of every roll, skill base, and identity cue. Record values for:

- **Might (MGT):** raw power, forcing, melee force, physical intimidation through presence
- **Grace (GRC):** agility, balance, reflex, precision under motion
- **Endurance (END):** stamina, pain tolerance, resisting exhaustion, harsh survival
- **Awareness (AWR):** noticing danger, reading space, sensing ambush
- **Intellect (INT):** reasoning, memory, analysis, learning, planning
- **Presence (PRE):** social force, composure, persuasion, deception, command, tone

Use the Attribute generation method from the One-on-One core rules (assigning Attribute scores of 70, 65, 60, 55, 50, 45) **or** assign 345 points to your six Attributes (minimum of 40, maximum of 80).

Record the final six values on your sheet.

> **Éire note:** In this setting, Presence is not "charisma" in the heroic-fantasy sense. It's the *weight* of you—how much the room must acknowledge your existence.

STEP 3 — Derive Essence (Your Magick Power Pool)

Sídhe magick draws from **Essence**—the inner reservoir that keeps you sharp, real, and able to push the world's attention into new shapes.

Essence Maximum (Module Rule)

Essence Max = ⌈**Presence (PRE)** ÷ **2**⌉ (round up)

- If PRE is 41, Essence Max is 21.
- If PRE is 60, Essence Max is 30.

Starting Essence

You begin play with **current Essence** = **Essence Max**.

> Essence is spent when you attempt workings with **Sídhe Magick** (whether the attempt succeeds or fails). Lineage innate abilities cost **no Essence**.
> Full details (cost tiers, recovery, and failure

complications) appear in the Sídhe Magick chapters.

Write **Essence Max** and **Essence Current** on your sheet.

STEP 4 — Set Skill Bases from Attributes

In core One-on-One, skills are d100 values. In *The Fading*, every skill begins with a **base value** determined by its linked Attribute.

Skill Base (Module Rule)

For every skill, calculate:

Skill Base = ⌊**Linked Attribute** ÷ **2**⌋
(round down)

Example:
If your Awareness is 55, then **any AWR-linked skill begins at 27** before you spend any points.

This means:

- high Attributes naturally produce higher baseline competence
- you still customize with a pool of Skill Points (next step)
- the One-on-One resolution engine remains unchanged (still d100, still modified skill value)

Write the base value next to each skill on your sheet (or write it once as a reminder: "All skill bases = linked Attribute ÷ 2").

STEP 5 — Distribute Your Skill Points

After bases are set, you receive a pool of points to distribute to any skills you like.

Skill Points Pool (Module Rule)

You begin with **200 Skill Points** to allocate.

- Each point increases a skill by **+1%**.
- You may invest in any skill available to Sídhe (which is *almost all skills in this module*).

Starting Cap (Recommended Creation Limit)

To preserve growth and keep early play tense and meaningful:

- **No skill may begin above 70%** after point allocation, unless the Director explicitly allows it.

This is not a new resolution rule—just a creation guideline that keeps the campaign's arc intact.

Trained vs. Barely-Known (Optional Clarity Tag)

To help the table understand what your Protagonist actually "leans on," use this simple label:

- If you invest **10+ points** into a skill above its base, it's **Trained**.
- If you invest **0–9 points**, it's **Familiar** (you can still roll it normally; it's just not your identity skill).

This is a descriptive tag only. It doesn't change rolls. It helps play.

STEP 6 — Finalize Your Skills (Including Sídhe Magick)

Now decide what your Protagonist *does*.

Skill Access in The Fading

All skills listed in this module are available to Sídhe **unless** the skill is explicitly labeled as "Human-only" (most won't be).

Sídhe Magick Skill

This module uses **one magick skill**:

- **Sídhe Magick (linked to INT)** — this skill governs your ability to perform:
  - **General Fae Magick** (the small, common arts all Sídhe can learn)
  - **one** chosen **School of Magick** (Glamour, Oathcraft, Hollow Ways, Hearthward, Well & Mirror, or Beastpact)

All Sídhe have access to General Fae Magick, but your effectiveness is governed by your **Sídhe Magick** skill value (base + any invested points). If you want magick to be central to your Protagonist, invest in Sídhe Magick like any other skill.

ONE School only: when your Protagonist commits to a School, that becomes your single deep path. You are not a roaming wizard; you are a specialist in a culturally coherent way.

> You may choose your one School now or when you first meaningfully study or witness it in play—Director's preference. Either way, you will never have more than one School on your sheet.

What to invest in first

Most Protagonists feel strong and distinct if you invest heavily in:

- **2 signature skills** (your "I solve problems this way" skills)
- **2 support skills** (covering your common weaknesses)
- **1 survival/travel skill**
- **1 social skill** (even if you're not "social," Éire makes negotiation unavoidable)
- optional: **Sídhe Magick** if it matters to your concept

You will see "Profession Packs" later (two for each Lineage) that recommend strong, lore-consistent allocations.

STEP 7 — Establish Destiny

Destiny is the One-on-One RPG's story-forward resource. It represents the moment when fate leans in your direction, when you refuse to be erased, when you turn a loss into an opening.

Starting Destiny

Use the **standard starting Destiny** from the One-on-One core rules.

If you need a quick table default while building: **3 Destiny** is a common starting point—but the core rulebook's starting value is the authority.

Destiny in The Fading (Module Guidance, Not a Rules Change)

Destiny most often feels right in this setting when spent to:

- preserve identity under pressure ("I will not be forgotten here.")
- protect someone inside hospitality
- force a bargain to land on fair terms
- avert a catastrophic tell (or contain its fallout)
- push through fear, exhaustion, or the creeping cold of iron's presence

Write your starting Destiny on your sheet.

STEP 8 — Tools & Starting Gear

Your Protagonist begins with practical gear suited to movement, secrecy, and non-iron survival.

Use the One-on-One core's starting gear approach (or your Director's baseline), with these Éire truths in mind:

- Sídhe avoid iron wherever possible.
- Many "items" are **tokens**: cords, pins, bowls, stones, offerings.
- A travel kit is as important as a weapon.

Recommended starting kit (always appropriate)

- a travel cloak with hidden pockets
- a cord bundle (knot-cord, spare ties, lintel thread)
- a token of home (hearth ash sachet, well-stone, carved toggle)
- a simple non-iron cutting tool (bone/bronze knife, stone edge, etc.)
- small offerings (salt horn, bread bits, bronze slivers, dried milk cakes)

Your Lineage may add a signature tool style later (Court regalia tokens, Wellspring bowls, Hearthbound salves, etc.).

STEP 9 — Define Your Anchors

In *The Fading*, the Protagonist does not float free. You survive by belonging to something—and that belonging creates stakes.

Choose or write these anchors:

1) Your Sanctuary Tie

Pick one:

- "I was raised here."
- "I defend it because I owe it."
- "It sheltered me when no one else would."
- "It holds a relic tied to my name."
- "It is failing, and I'm the one sent to fix it."

Name the sanctuary (even a provisional name) and write one sentence of what it's like.

2) Your Vow or Taboo

Choose one vow you try to keep, and one taboo you fear breaking.

Examples:

- Vow: "I will not deny guest-right to the desperate."
- Taboo: "I will not speak my true name near a spoiled well."

3) Your Key Relationship

Pick one NPC connection (a mentor, rival, dependent, or ally) and define what they want from you.

Examples:

- "Rua Hearth-Thread expects me to escort refugees without hesitation."
- "Ailbhe of the White Torc expects obedience to court sanction."
- "Sadhbh Wind-Thread expects me to show mercy even when it costs us."

4) Your Tell

A "tell" is any trait, habit, mark, or aura that increases the chance humans notice you as *not quite right*.

Examples:

- your shadow lags by half a heartbeat
- iron makes your skin sting visibly
- animals fall silent when you pass
- your reflection sometimes looks older than you are
- your voice carries too well in fog

Tells do not "nerf" you. They create story pressure and complications that make Éire feel alive.

STEP 10 — Companion Setup

If your campaign uses a Companion (common in One-on-One play), record:

- who they are
- how you are bonded
- what they want
- what they fear

Use the **Companion rules synopsis** in Part II later, and choose from **Appendix E: Pregenerated Companions** if you want a ready-made option that fits the setting.

Final Checklist

Before you move on, your sheet should show:

- ✅ Lineage selected
- ✅ Primary Attributes recorded (MGT/GRC/END/AWR/INT/PRE)
- ✅ Essence Max and Current Essence (starts full)
- ✅ Skills listed with bases + allocated points (cap observed)
- ✅ Sídhe Magick noted if invested; one School chosen now or earmarked
- ✅ Starting Destiny recorded (per One-on-One core)
- ✅ Starting tools/gear noted
- ✅ Sanctuary tie, vow/taboo, key relationship, tell
- ✅ Companion chosen or deferred to (see Book 1, Chapter 30)

CHAPTER 2: PRIMARY ATTRIBUTES IN ÉIRE

Your Primary Attributes are not just numbers. In *The Fading*, they are the **ways you remain real** under pressure. They shape what you notice, what you endure, how you move, what you can force, and how strongly your presence holds in a room that wants to forget you.

Mechanically, nothing here replaces the One-on-One core. You still make d100 skill rolls. You still apply Advantage/Disadvantage and Destiny as written. In this module, however, your Attributes also matter at the very start because they set **Skill Bases** (Chapter 1) and establish how your Sídhe "reads" in the waking world.

This chapter gives you:

- clear, setting-anchored meanings for each Attribute
- how each Attribute tends to **appear** in Sídhe life
- what each Attribute commonly supports (the kinds of skills and scenes it naturally touches)
- how to portray strong or weak values in play (without caricature)
- optional "tells" tied to the attribute (purely narrative prompts)

No Target Numbers: As with all One-on-One play, there are no fixed TNs here. When you roll, your "target" is your **modified skill value** after any situation-based Advantages/Disadvantages and other modifiers.

Attribute Snapshot (Quick Reference)

- **Might (MGT):** raw power, forcing, melee force, physical intimidation through presence
- **Grace (GRC):** agility, balance, reflex, fine movement, precision under motion
- **Endurance (END):** stamina, pain tolerance, resisting exhaustion, surviving harsh conditions
- **Awareness (AWR):** noticing danger, reading space, reaction to threats, sensing ambush
- **Intellect (INT):** reasoning, memory, analysis, learning, planning, technical comprehension
- **Presence (PRE):** social force, composure, persuasion, deception, command, intimidation tone

MIGHT (MGT) — The Hand That Moves the World

Might is force—yes—but in Éire it is also **the ability to insist the world give way**. A Sídhe with high Might does not merely lift and strike. They hold doors. They drag someone out of bog water. They push through a press of bodies. They endure the physical work that keeps sanctuaries alive: hauling water, moving stones, carrying elders, breaking a jammed gate in a storm.

What Might looks like in the setting

- a steady grip and confident posture
- comfort with labor and "hard tasks"
- a physical calm that makes others step aside

- when threatened, an instinct to *close distance* rather than retreat

Scenes where Might matters (fiction-first)

- forcing a barred door or collapsing a small obstacle to make an escape route
- wrestling a panicked animal, dragging a cart from mud, pulling someone from a current
- breaking a tool free, bending a nail from a lintel, snapping a trap line
- physical intimidation that is less "shouting" and more **certainty**

If your Might is high

Play it as competence, not bravado. You conserve motion. You do not need to prove it.

If your Might is low

Play it as leverage and strategy. You avoid contests of force, enlist help, use tools, pick angles.

Optional Might Tell prompts (narrative only)

- your footprint sinks slightly deeper than it should
- wood creaks when you lean on it
- iron makes your muscles twitch, visible to observers

GRACE (GRC) — The Body That Refuses to Stumble

Grace is the art of moving through a world full of thresholds. It is balance on wet stone. It is silence in dry grass. It is the ability to **remain elegant under urgency**—to keep fine control when fear tries to make you clumsy.

In *The Fading*, Grace is also "how well you belong in motion." A Sídhe who runs corridors, climbs ridge paths, slips through crowded villages, or navigates tight barrow halls depends on Grace not just to survive but to stay unseen.

What Grace looks like in the setting

- stillness that seems deliberate, even at rest
- hands that do not fumble knots or tokens
- movement that avoids unnecessary noise
- a habit of watching footing before committing weight

Scenes where Grace matters

- crossing slick fords, stepping along stone edges, balancing over bog planks
- slipping past a firelit doorway without drawing eyes
- dodging in close quarters, avoiding harm by *not being where it lands*
- precision tasks while stressed: knotting cords, setting small wards, hiding tokens

If your Grace is high

You move like the world expects you. Doors open. People don't notice you until you want them to.

If your Grace is low

You compensate with caution. You take longer routes. You anchor yourself. You rely on allies who can move quietly.

Optional Grace Tell prompts

- your shadow doesn't quite match your steps
- you never seem to splash even in shallow water
- animals track your movement too easily, as if your path leaves a scent of motion

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ENDURANCE (END) — The Breath That Carries You Through Winter

Endurance is the ability to keep going when the story stops being heroic and becomes physical reality: hunger, cold, long travel, injuries, sleepless nights, cramped refuges, and the raw stress of being hunted.

In this setting, Endurance is deeply tied to **refuge life**. A high-Endurance Sídhe can stand watch longer, recover from a forced march, survive exposure, and keep functioning even when grief has eaten sleep.

What Endurance looks like in the setting

- practical habits: layering clothing, conserving energy, eating when you can
- emotional containment under fatigue

- a willingness to do the "unseen work" repeatedly
- scars that aren't boasted about—just carried

Scenes where Endurance matters

- winter travel, storm nights, forced marches
- resisting panic spirals and sleep rot
- taking a hit and staying functional long enough to reach safety
- surviving bad water, foul air in hidden halls, or nights without a proper hearth

If your Endurance is high

You become someone others rely on. You are the anchor in bad weather.

If your Endurance is low

You become more strategic about rest and shelter. You seek warmth and avoid "bravery-by-suffering."

Optional Endurance Tell prompts

- cold never reddens your skin the way it does others
- you breathe too quietly in sleep, unsettling companions
- iron makes your teeth ache as if you've bitten stone

AWARENESS (AWR) — The Eye That Sees the Net

Awareness is vigilance and spatial reading. It's the ability to notice the thing that does not belong: a nail where no nail should be, a salt line laid too cleanly, a crow watching too long, a dog that tracks empty air.

In *The Fading*, Awareness is often the difference between **being hunted** and **being cornered**.

What Awareness looks like in the setting

- you keep track of exits without seeming paranoid
- you read people's attention—who is watching, who is pretending not to
- you notice small changes in domestic spaces (a moved bowl, a disturbed hearth ash)
- you see the "shape" of pursuit—where hunters would place themselves

Scenes where Awareness matters

- spotting ambush signs: trampled reeds, too-quiet birds, hounds trained wrong
- recognizing infiltration: a token moved, an offering missing too quickly
- navigating dangerous territory: bog edges, ridge lines, crowded markets
- sensing when a place is "thin," wrong, or spoiled

If your Awareness is high

Play it as pattern recognition. You don't see everything—you see what matters.

If your Awareness is low

You rely on procedures: checking thresholds, traveling with scouts, asking Wellspring guidance.

Optional Awareness Tell prompts

- you turn your head slightly before danger appears, like you heard it first
- insects go silent when you focus
- reflections show you noticing things before you physically react

---

INTELLECT (INT) — The Mind That Holds the Map

Intellect is reasoning, memory, and structured thought. It is how you keep track of oaths, route lore, family histories, token meanings, and the shifting politics between courts and clans.

In Éire, Intellect is not just "book learning." It includes tactical planning, survival logic, interpreting patterns in blight and omen, and understanding how human institutions behave—especially Gael lords, abbots, and the slow machinery of settlement.

What Intellect looks like in the setting

- you ask the right questions before acting
- you remember what was promised and what was implied

- you plan two steps ahead without becoming rigid
- you can learn new customs fast when entering a new territory

Scenes where Intellect matters

- negotiating treaties, spotting hidden clauses, understanding what a bargain *really* costs
- decoding cairn codes, reading sanctuary signs, interpreting route variations
- investigating blight: tracing cause, testing hypotheses, connecting symptoms
- building a plan that balances secrecy, speed, and mercy

If your Intellect is high

Play it as clarity. You don't need to sound "smart." You make fewer wasted moves.

If your Intellect is low

Play it as instinct and empathy. You rely on lived experience, allies, and directness.

Optional Intellect Tell prompts

- you speak in patterns others fall into unconsciously
- you recall names too perfectly, unsettling strangers
- iron disrupts your concentration with a faint ringing behind your eyes

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PRESENCE (PRE) — The Weight That Makes the Room Listen

Presence is your social force, composure, command tone, persuasion, deception, and intimidation. In *The Fading*, Presence also carries a deeper meaning: **how strongly you "register" as real** in the social world.

A Sídhe can survive being unseen, but they cannot survive being irrelevant. Presence is the power to shape decisions, maintain hospitality, command attention when needed, and hold steady under accusation.

What Presence looks like in the setting

- stillness that changes conversation pace
- confidence without volume
- the ability to lie without flinching, or tell the truth without fear
- an aura that makes others treat you as "someone who matters"

Scenes where Presence matters

- calming a refuge hall on the edge of panic
- persuading a Gael lord to accept terms without feeling humiliated
- surviving interrogation by iron-hunters (socially, not just physically)
- commanding allies in a crisis, delivering sanction, holding a gathering together

Presence and Essence (Module Link)

In *The Fading*, Presence does one more thing: it helps define your inner reservoir for magick.

As established in Chapter 1:
Essence Max = $\lceil \mathbf{PRE} \div \mathbf{2} \rceil$ (round up)

This does not mean "charismatic people are wizards." It means those who can **hold themselves steady**—who can maintain identity and weight—tend to have more fuel to push reality.

If your Presence is high

Play it as gravity. People pay attention even when you speak softly.

If your Presence is low

Play it as invisibility and honesty. You let others underestimate you, and you move through cracks.

Optional Presence Tell prompts

- your voice carries oddly far in fog
- you leave a lingering impression that people can't describe
- iron makes your words catch, as if your tongue resents it

Attribute Synergy (How They Combine in Play)

In duet play, your Protagonist feels most distinct when their Attributes produce a clear pattern:

- **High AWR + High GRC:** corridor runner, ambush-avoider, quiet infiltrator
- **High PRE + High INT:** diplomat, oath-reader, court negotiator, sanction voice
- **High END + High MGT:** protector, porter, siege endurance, "keeps going" hero
- **High AWR + High INT:** investigator of rot, omen pattern reader, cautious strategist
- **High PRE + High END:** refuge leader, morale anchor, unbreakable witness in crisis
- **High GRC + High PRE:** social chameleon, poised liar, infiltrator in plain sight

These combinations don't lock you into a profession; they simply suggest what you'll naturally be good at before skill points define your focus.

Attribute Roleplaying Without Stereotypes

A high number should not force a personality. A low number should not make you incompetent. The Sídhe are old and complicated, and people survive in different ways.

Use these lenses instead:

- **High Might:** you solve problems through force *when needed*, not always.
- **High Grace:** you control your body under stress, not necessarily "pretty."
- **High Endurance:** you endure hardship, not necessarily "stoic."
- **High Awareness:** you read space, not necessarily "paranoid."
- **High Intellect:** you think clearly, not necessarily "academic."
- **High Presence:** you carry weight, not necessarily "friendly."

A Note for Directors

Because this is a One-on-One campaign, the Protagonist's highest Attribute is often a clue to what kinds of scenes will feel satisfying. Use that as guidance when choosing opening situations and recurring pressures.

- High Awareness wants ambushes, tells, and pursuit patterns.
- High Presence wants bargains, councils, and moral leadership moments.
- High Endurance wants winter survival and "keep the hearth alive" scenes.
- High Intellect wants investigation, treaty terms, and pattern mysteries.
- High Grace wants routes, stealth, and narrow escapes.
- High Might wants physical rescue, confrontation, and decisive intervention.

CHAPTER 3: SHARED SÍDHE TRAITS AND VULNERABILITIES

All six Lineages are Sídhe. Before you are Court-Sídhe or Moundborn, before you are runner or healer or omen-reader, you are one of the **People of the Veiled Thresholds**—a being shaped by hospitality, witness, tokens, and the slow tightening of the waking world.

This chapter defines what **all** Sídhe share: the cultural laws that bind you, the sensory realities of Éire, and the setting mechanics that make *The Fading* feel unlike any other One-on-One campaign.

Nothing in this chapter alters the One-on-One engine. You still resolve uncertainty with d100 skill rolls, modified skill value, Advantage/Disadvantage, and Destiny. What follows are **setting overlays**—shared truths that create consistent consequences and unique story pressure.

The Sídhe in One Sentence

You are real because the world remembers you, and the world remembers you because you keep your customs alive.

When the customs break, the remembering breaks. When the remembering breaks, you begin to **Fade**.

Shared Sídhe Traits (Applies to All Lineages)

1) The Courtesy of Names

Sídhe do not treat names as labels. Names are **handles**. A true name is a lever; a courtesy name is a mask that can still carry honor.

Most Sídhe maintain:

- a **Courtesy Name** (the name used in halls, markets, among allies)
- one or more **Travel Names** (used on the road, in mixed company, among humans)
- a **True Name** (protected, rarely spoken aloud, never offered lightly)

Module Guidance

- You may change a Travel Name whenever it makes sense in the fiction.
- Your Courtesy Name may change, but it is culturally meaningful to do so—often tied to a major life event, oath, or sanction.
- Your True Name should be treated like a secret that has **weight**.

MECHANIC: True Name Leverage (Setting Overlay)

If an enemy learns your **True Name** and speaks it as part of a binding act (especially at a witnessed place such as a well, standing stone, or sanctified threshold), the Director may immediately apply one of the following:

- impose **Disadvantage** on a relevant roll where the True Name is being used against you (resisting coercion, escaping a bargain, maintaining composure), **and/or**

- inflict a narrative **Consequence** (using One-on-One's normal consequence framework) such as:
    - **Name-Bound** (you feel compelled toward a location, person, or action)
    - **Voice Stolen** (you cannot speak a crucial truth in a specific place)
    - **Warded Against You** (a threshold "refuses" you until you address the binding)

This is not a new resolution system. It is permission for the Director to treat True Names as real leverage in play.

DESTINY NOTE

Destiny is especially appropriate when you refuse the grip of your True Name—reclaiming selfhood, breaking a binding moment, or protecting someone else's name.

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2) Hospitality and Guest-Right

Hospitality is not "politeness." It is infrastructure. In a hunted world, hospitality is how your people move, survive, and remain a people instead of scattered prey.

Hospitality customs vary by Lineage and sanctuary, but **Guest-Right** is broadly recognized:

- a guest who is granted shelter under your roof is protected by the rules of the hearth
- a host who accepts guest-right takes on responsibility, even if it is inconvenient
- a guest who violates guest-right loses protection and may be sanctioned

What counts as guest-right in play

Guest-right is invoked when someone is:

- invited across a threshold with explicit welcome
- offered food, drink, or warmth **as a guest**
- sheltered in a sanctuary with acknowledged protection

A casual conversation on a road is not guest-right. A bowl of broth inside a refuge hall often is.

MECHANIC: Guest-Right Is a Binding Fictional State

When guest-right is active, it changes what actions are "clean" or "dirty" in the story. The Director should treat violations as major consequences, not minor hiccups.

If a Sídhe deliberately violates guest-right (host betrays guest or guest betrays host in a way the sanctuary recognizes as a breach), the Director may immediately:

- apply a significant **Consequence** such as **Oath-Stained**, **Hearth-Wrong**, or **Witness-Shamed**, and
- advance an appropriate **Clock** (see Tells & Attention below), because hospitality breaches ripple through networks fast.

This does not prevent violence in play; it makes violence under hospitality **meaningful**.

CULTURAL TRUTH

A people who cannot trust hospitality cannot run refuges. A people who cannot run refuges do not survive winter.

---

3) Witness Is Real

Wells, standing stones, old halls, hawthorn boundaries, and threshold sites are more than scenery. They are witnesses—places that "remember" what is done there.

Witness does not always punish. Witness also **protects**:

- oaths spoken under witness are more stable
- treaties made under witness are harder to twist without consequence
- hospitality honored under witness strengthens sanctuary morale and cohesion

MECHANIC: Witness Justifies Stronger Consequences

When a scene takes place under strong witness (well, stone ring, oath-post, sanctified threshold), the Director is encouraged to:

- treat lies, betrayals, and breaches as higher-stakes, and
- apply consequences more decisively.

Mechanically, this most often shows up as:

- Disadvantage on deception or manipulation that contradicts the witnessed truth
- a consequence that "sticks" socially (rumors spread, alliances fracture)
- a sanctuary or spirit responding to breach (refusal, omen, cold hearth)

Again: same d100 engine. Witness simply tells you **when the world should push back**.

---

4) Tokens Matter

A token is not "loot." A token is a portable piece of meaning: a cord with knots, a carved toggle, a stone from a well, a pinch of hearth ash, a strip of cloth from a sanctuary curtain.

Tokens serve as:

- proof of relationship ("I belong here," "I was sent," "I am under protection")
- keys to safehouse networks
- anchors for memory and identity
- tools for magick (especially with Sídhe Magick)

MECHANIC: Tokens Create Advantage Through Positioning

When you have a token that is relevant and recognized, it often justifies **Advantage** (or prevents Disadvantage) on:

- social access ("Let me in.")
- negotiation ("We have shared witness.")
- travel ("This route recognizes me.")
- investigation ("This object remembers.")

The token isn't a numeric bonus by itself. It changes the fiction in a way the One-on-One engine already supports.

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5) Sanctuary Resonance

Even Sídhe who travel feel the pull of "inside." A sanctuary is not just shelter; it is identity. Sídhe tend to:

- sleep better within a known hearth-space
- feel unsettled when a refuge's witness is compromised
- react strongly to sanctuary breach (especially iron intrusion or guest-right violation)

This resonance is why sanctuary threats are never abstract.

MECHANIC: Sanctuary Breach Creates Immediate Story Pressure

When a sanctuary is breached (iron introduced, witness spoiled, hospitality broken, guardian angered), the Director should treat it as:

- a scene-worthy event, and
- a source of consequences and/or clock advancement.

Sanctuaries don't fail silently. They fail loudly—sometimes with fear, sometimes with omens, sometimes with political fracture.

The Shared Vulnerability

Cold Iron: The World's Hard Refusal

The Sídhe do not fear iron as a superstition. They experience it as a **physical contradiction**—a material that rejects their layered nature and makes the world more brutally singular.

In *The Fading*, iron is also the central tool of the waking world's expansion: nails, hinges, blades, horseshoes, bells, chains, plowshares. As Gaels build and consolidate, iron becomes common—and so does the pressure.

What counts as "iron" for this module

For simplicity and consistency, treat the following as **Iron**:

- iron and steel weapons and tools
- iron nails, chains, manacles, iron filings

- iron reinforcements in thresholds (hinges, bars, gate fittings)
- iron bells and bell hardware
- concentrated iron in ritual forms (nail-circles, filings in salt, etc.)

The Director may treat "iron-rich" implements (even if mixed) as iron if they are being used specifically to harm or ward against the Sídhe.

Iron Mechanics (Setting Overlay)

These rules are designed to plug into One-on-One without replacing anything. They function through **Disadvantage**, **Consequences**, and **Clock pressure**.

1) Iron Disruption (Immediate Effect)

When you are forced into close contact with iron, or remain near heavy iron in a confined space, the Director may apply **Disadvantage** to actions that require steadiness of self, including:

- Sídhe Magick attempts
- stealth relying on veil-like subtlety
- social composure when you are physically reacting
- concentration, delicate work, or calm witness speech

This is not automatic every time a nail exists in the world. Use it when iron is **meaningfully present**: a blacksmith's forge, an iron-hunter's nail cart, manacles, a bell tower interior, a line of iron spikes at a threshold.

2) Iron Wounds (Harm Escalation)

When you take injury/harm from an **iron** weapon or iron-laced trap, it bites deeper than normal.

MECHANIC: Iron Harm Escalation

Whenever an iron source inflicts harm that would create a Consequence (injury condition) using the One-on-One consequences framework, apply one of the following approaches (Director chooses one style for the whole campaign and stays consistent):

Style A — Step Worse (cleanest)

- Treat the resulting injury consequence as **one step more severe** than it otherwise would be.

Style B — Add the Iron Tag

- Apply the normal injury consequence **and** add a linked minor consequence tag: **Iron-Singed**.
    - Iron-Singed is a narrative complication the Director can invoke for Disadvantage where appropriate (especially magick, composure, or recovery scenes).

Either style keeps the core engine intact while making iron feel like the Sídhe's true bane.

3) Iron in Sanctuaries (Breach Event)

Iron within a sanctuary is not merely uncomfortable; it is **structural sabotage**.

MECHANIC: Iron Breach Always Has a Consequence

If iron is introduced into a sanctuary in a meaningful way (nails in lintels, iron filings in thresholds, iron object hidden near the hearth, iron chain under a bed), the Director should do at least one of:

- advance a relevant **Clock** (see below)
- inflict a sanctuary-facing consequence in fiction (sleep breaks, wards weaken, morale sours, guardian agitation)
- introduce a follow-up threat (hunters arrive, rumors spread, routes become unreliable)

Sanctuary breach is one of the setting's signature pressure engines. Treat it with weight.

Tells and Attention

How the World Starts Looking at You

In One-on-One play, complications are fuel. In *The Fading*, complications often take a specific form: **tells**—small markers that make the Sídhe easier to notice, track, or target.

Tells can be:

- physical (a reaction to iron, a shadow that lags, eyes too reflective)
- behavioral (ritual habits, courtesy phrasing, avoidance patterns)
- environmental (animals reacting, fog thickening, wells tasting wrong after you pass)
- social (rumors, witness gossip, an abbot's records tightening)

Tells are not punishments. They are how the campaign becomes about **survival under attention** rather than random fights.

The Attention Clock (Optional but Highly Recommended)

This module plays beautifully when the tightening net is visible. The best tool for that is a **Clock**.

> This uses the One-on-One RPG's Clock concept (detailed later in Part II). Here, we introduce a setting-specific Clock you can track immediately.

THE ATTENTION CLOCK

A simple 4-segment Clock representing how much the waking world has begun to **notice** the Protagonist or their sanctuary.

- **0/4:** rumor-light; you move freely if careful
- **1/4:** whispers, uneasy looks, dogs barking more
- **2/4:** organized curiosity; a hunter band probes, a priest asks questions
- **3/4:** active pursuit; hounds, informants, nails, patrol routes
- **4/4:** the net tightens — a raid, an accusation, a bell project, a forced confrontation

This Clock can represent attention on:

- the **Protagonist**, or
- a specific **Sanctuary**, or
- a **Route Network**

Some campaigns track one. Some track all three. Keep it simple at first: start with one Clock.

When to Advance the Attention Clock

Advance 1 segment when:

- Sídhe Magick is used openly in view of humans, or leaves obvious effects
- a sanctuary suffers an iron breach
- hospitality is publicly violated
- a major scene ends with noise, blood, or undeniable weirdness
- a named enemy (iron-hunter captain, abbot, border lord) takes personal interest
- the Protagonist fails in a way that produces public consequence (a chase through a village, a bargain gone wrong)

Advance 2 segments when:

- a bell is consecrated near your thin place
- you kill or humiliate a human authority figure publicly
- an iron-hunter cell obtains a token linked to you or your sanctuary
- you return to the same hunted area repeatedly without laying false trails

How to Reduce the Attention Clock

Reducing attention should require deliberate action in fiction, such as:

- laying misdirection through Moundborn methods
- relocating a safehouse or changing route habits
- negotiating a cover story with a Gael authority
- sacrificing something that "pays" for quiet (a bargain, a gift, a controlled confession)
- eliminating a specific informant or record source discreetly

Reduction is never automatic. It's a choice—often a costly one.

The Fading

The Slow Loss That Isn't Just Death

Sídhe die in bodies like anyone else, but *The Fading* is a different kind of death: the loss of being recognized, the thinning of witness, the erosion of identity until you become story-fragment.

You do not need a "Fading meter" to play this. The setting already delivers it through consequences, attention, and sanctuary loss. However, some tables like to make it explicit.

OPTIONAL: The Fading Clock (Personal)

A 6-segment personal Clock representing how close the Protagonist is to losing something essential.

Advance it when:

- you suffer repeated iron wounds without respite
- you break a major oath or violate hospitality without atonement
- you are Name-Bound and do not address it
- you abandon sanctuaries or people in ways that haunt you

When it fills, choose a lasting outcome (Director and player agree in fiction):

- a cherished memory becomes unreliable
- a relationship bond fractures
- a sanctuary no longer recognizes you as "inside"
- your reflection begins to contradict you
- your Travel Names stop working and people remember the same "wrong story" about you

This Clock is optional. If you use it, keep it rare and meaningful—something that signals "the world is winning."

Shared Cultural Tools That Keep You Alive

These are not separate systems—just play procedures that give the Sídhe their distinctive texture.

Offerings

Offerings are small but powerful: milk, bread, salt, bronze slivers, herbs, song, cord, a spoken thanks.

When offerings matter:

- when asking passage
- when requesting sanctuary entry
- when seeking a spirit's attention
- when smoothing a tense negotiation

Offerings often justify Advantage through fictional positioning.

Courtesy Phrases

The Sídhe have phrases that act like keys. (You'll find more in the Lineage chapters and Magick chapters.)

Examples:

- "I come under peace and witnessed breath."
- "I ask shelter under the old warmth."
- "Let the hearth remember this kindness."

Using these correctly doesn't guarantee success—but it establishes the right fiction for success to be possible.

Silence and Containment

Sídhe survival often depends on refusing to escalate publicly. The Protagonist will sometimes win by:

- leaving rather than fighting
- choosing secrecy over pride
- controlling fear so the hall does not panic

This is not weakness. It is strategy.

Quick Player Summary

What all Sídhe share

- Names have weight; true names are leverage.
- Hospitality is law; violating it costs you socially and spiritually.

- Witness sites matter; they amplify truth and consequence.
- Tokens carry belonging and function as keys.
- Sanctuaries are alive socially; breach is never "just an item problem."
- Iron hurts more than other materials and disrupts steadiness.
- Tells create attention; attention creates pursuit.
- Destiny is your narrative refusal to be erased.

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CHAPTER 4: THE SIX LINEAGES (ARCHETYPES)

In *The Fading*, your **Lineage** is your archetype. It is not a "class" you can retrain out of; it is the way your nature and your upbringing meet. Your Lineage shapes how you are raised, what you're expected to know, how you are treated in councils, and what kinds of duties people will try to place on your shoulders.

Mechanically, your Lineage provides a suite of **predetermined innate abilities**. These abilities are **fixed**—you do not choose them. They are your "racial traits," expressed as distinctive Sídhe gifts and instincts.

Lineage Innates — Rules Summary (applies to all six)

- **Predetermined:** Your Lineage defines your innate list. No selection step.
- **No Essence Cost:** Innates do **not** spend Essence.
- **Main Action:** Using an innate in a meaningful way requires a **Main action** (Chapter 1).
- **Uses the Core Engine:** If an innate's outcome is uncertain or contested, resolve it using the **normal One-on-One d100 approach** (roll the most relevant skill; apply Advantage/Disadvantage; Destiny may be spent as usual). There are **no TNs**—your target is the **modified skill value**.
- **Fiction First:** Many innates are *permissions* ("you can do this at all") or *positioning* ("this can justify Advantage / prevent Disadvantage").
- **Tells and Attention:** Using innates openly, loudly, or repeatedly in the waking world can create **tells** and advance the **Attention Clock**, at the Director's discretion.

Important design intent: Even a Protagonist who does **not** invest heavily in Sídhe Magick still feels like their Lineage. Innates should matter in play because they change what scenes you can solve and how you solve them.

COURT-SÍDHE — The Witnessed Word

Court-Sídhe are the formal face of the People: envoys, heralds, sanctioners, and the ones who hold the shape of law when everything else is slipping. They know the old courtesies, the true stakes of a "harmless" phrase, and how to make a bargain land so it can't be wriggled out of without consequence.

Common Appearance Traits

Court-Sídhe tend toward deliberate presentation:

- carefully maintained hair and adornment, even in hardship
- an eye for symmetry and meaningful tokens (torcs, cords, seals, rings)
- posture that reads as composed—even when exhausted
- voices that carry clearly without volume

No two courts dress the same, but Court-Sídhe generally look like people who know they're being watched and refuse to look small.

Cultural Expectations

Court-Sídhe are expected to:

- speak for sanctuaries and networks without getting them killed
- remember terms, debts, and precedents
- enforce hospitality standards (or argue why exceptions must be made)
- deliver sanctions when breaches occur—especially public breaches

In hard seasons, Court-Sídhe become lightning rods. When people are frightened, they blame the ones whose job is "law."

Typical Roles in Play

- diplomat to Gael lords, abbots, and border authorities
- negotiator of passage rights with Fir Bolg clans
- internal mediator between rival Sídhe coalitions
- witness speaker in a blight accusation or betrayal crisis

Court-Sídhe Tells

- your words feel *too precise*; people repeat them later without meaning to
- you speak a courtesy phrase under stress that humans find unsettling
- in a witnessed place, your voice seems to "settle" into stone or water
- iron makes your mouth go slightly dry, like you're biting chalk

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Court-Sídhe Innate Abilities

These are your Lineage gifts. They cost no Essence and require a Main action to employ meaningfully.

1) Witnessed Utterance

When you speak formal terms under clear witness (well, standing stones, a recognized threshold), your words *carry weight*.

- **Use:** declare terms, accuse a breach, demand an answer, bind a moment socially.
- **Effect:** strengthens the fiction that consequences will stick; can justify **Advantage** on relevant social rolls where witness matters.
- **Contested:** roll the most relevant social skill (often a Presence-linked skill such as persuasion, command, or deception depending on intent).

2) Sanction Sense

You have an instinct for when a promise has been twisted or hospitality has been quietly violated.

- **Use:** identify hidden clause intent, sense a breach-shaped "wrongness," spot etiquette traps.
- **Effect:** can justify Advantage on investigation/negotiation scenes about bargains, guest-right, or court procedure.
- **Contested:** if someone is actively disguising terms, resolve with opposed social/investigation skills as normal.

3) The Courtesy Blade

You can cut with politeness—cornering someone without raising your voice.

- **Use:** turn a conversation into a choice between two unfavorable options for your opponent.
- **Effect:** forces a social scene to "come to a point" (Director should respond with a clear stake).
- **Roll:** when it matters, roll the relevant Presence-linked skill. On a failure, you still sharpen the scene—but you make an enemy or advance attention.

4) Token of Standing

You can make a token "count" as proof of legitimacy—by presenting it with the correct form.

- **Use:** gain entry, secure audience, prevent a guard from dismissing you, prove you were sent.
- **Effect:** converts a token into social positioning (often negating Disadvantage in access scenes).
- **Limits:** doesn't work on those who reject Sídhe legitimacy entirely; then it becomes a tell.

5) Oath-Recall

You remember what was promised with uncomfortable clarity.

- **Use:** recite terms, reveal precedent, call out contradiction.
- **Effect:** protects you from "we never said that" manipulation and supports the Director in making bargains feel real.
- **Mechanics:** no special roll required unless your memory is compromised by consequence (iron-singe, fatigue, blight, etc.).

6) Quiet Authority

In crisis, you can hold a room together long enough for decisions to be made.

- **Use:** stop panic, impose order, restore a threatened hospitality moment.
- **Effect:** allows a social reset scene; can justify Advantage on calming/command rolls.
- **Cost (fictional):** doing this paints a target on you—leaders become targets.

7) The Refusal of Shame

You can carry public accusation without collapsing.

- **Use:** remain composed under interrogation, survive public challenge, keep speaking when the hall turns cold.
- **Effect:** can negate or reduce the narrative impact of humiliation; Destiny shines here when you refuse erasure.

Vows & Taboos (prompts)

- Vow: "I will not let guest-right become meaningless."
- Taboo: "I will not speak binding terms in an unwitnessed place."
- Vow: "I will carry the ugly truth if it keeps the people alive."

MOUNDBORN — The Veil's Infrastructure

Moundborn are the hidden halls: those who keep sanctuaries secret, manage false trails, maintain safehouse etiquette, and ensure the People can move without being seen. Their work is rarely celebrated, because celebration draws attention.

Common Appearance Traits

Moundborn vary widely, but they often share:

- practical clothing layered for travel and concealment
- small, personal tokens (cords, toggles, stitched signs) rather than loud regalia
- eyes that track exits and shadows constantly
- a habit of standing where they can see the whole space

Some Moundborn bear faint marks from long proximity to thresholds—skin that looks slightly "dimmer" in torchlight, or a shadow that clings closer than it should.

Cultural Expectations

Moundborn are expected to:

- know routes, hide routes, and rewrite routes
- maintain safehouse discipline
- prioritize secrecy over pride
- keep the sanctuary functioning even when everyone else argues

They are often accused of coldness. It isn't coldness. It's triage.

Typical Roles in Play

- veilrunner escorting refugees
- sanctuary architect and ward-supporter (in collaboration with Hearthbound)
- investigator of infiltration, informants, and token compromise
- misdirection specialist during pursuit arcs

Moundborn Tells

- doors seem to "forget" you after you pass

- your footprints vanish too quickly in damp soil
- animals look through you as if you're part of the hedge
- iron makes your skin prickle in a visible wave

Moundborn Innate Abilities

1) Veil-Step

You can slip through attention—becoming briefly difficult to track in a cluttered environment.

- **Use:** break line of sight, vanish into crowds, disappear into reeds, slip behind a threshold feature.
- **Effect:** permits escape/stealth solutions that would be impossible for others; often justifies Advantage or negates Disadvantage.
- **Contested:** roll the relevant stealth/movement skill if actively pursued.

2) False Trail Instinct

You instinctively know what sign you leave behind—and how to spoil it.

- **Use:** confuse hounds, mislead trackers, hide a route's true entrance.
- **Effect:** the Director should respond by reducing pursuit certainty or by forcing enemies to waste time/resources.
- **Roll:** when it matters, use a travel/survival/infiltration skill; failure advances the Attention Clock rather than "nothing happens."

3) Threshold Listening

You feel when a boundary has been tampered with.

- **Use:** detect iron in a lintel, a salt line laid wrong, a seam forced open recently.
- **Effect:** early warning; often gives you the first move in a breach scene.
- **Mechanics:** no roll unless the breach is expertly hidden; then resolve with an investigative/perceptive skill.

4) Token Camouflage

You can "mute" the social loudness of a token or object.

- **Use:** carry court tokens through human spaces, hide sanctuary signs, dull a relic's attention.
- **Effect:** reduces tell generation and supports secret travel.
- **Risk:** if used repeatedly in public, it can create a different tell—people feel uneasy without knowing why.

5) Hollow Familiarity

Even without being a Hollow Way specialist, you know the etiquette of seams.

- **Use:** avoid the worst missteps, recognize when a doorway is "not for you," retreat before error becomes catastrophe.
- **Effect:** lets you engage with layered spaces safely at a basic level.
- **Note:** deep Hollow Ways workings remain in Sídhe Magick; this is survival instinct.

6) Quiet Hand

You can act without making a scene—removing a problem before panic spreads.

- **Use:** extract a compromised person, relocate a token, remove a small iron object, handle a domestic crisis discreetly.
- **Effect:** prevents social escalation; keeps refuge stability intact.
- **Roll:** use an appropriate skill if opposed; on failure, you still act but leave a tell.

7) The Unseen Oath

Moundborn can keep a promise without needing applause.

- **Use:** maintain discipline when others break, hold secrecy when pressured.
- **Effect:** supports resisting coercion and interrogation; Destiny use often feels very "Moundborn" here.

HOSTBORN — The People in Motion

Hostborn are flights: escorts, scouts, raiders, corridor guardians. They move under pressure and make hard decisions fast. When refuge networks need muscle, speed, and willingness to risk pursuit, Hostborn are called.

Common Appearance Traits

Hostborn tend to look "road-made":

- weathered cloaks, layered gear, scarred hands
- quick eyes, restless stance, constant readiness to move
- practical tokens tied to belts or cords—tools you can reach in a sprint
- bodies built for endurance and sudden violence rather than display

Cultural Expectations

Hostborn are expected to:

- escort refugees without hesitation
- strike threats before they grow
- guard corridors, fords, and ridge paths
- accept that people will blame them when reprisals come

They are admired and feared. A Hostborn's presence can calm a refuge hall... or make it nervous about what pursuit they've brought.

Typical Roles in Play

- corridor runner / refuge escort
- hunter of iron-hunter cells and informants
- defender of moving sanctuaries
- quick-response ally in siege and crisis frames

Hostborn Tells

- hounds react to you faster than they should
- your breath fogs oddly even in mild air
- you carry the smell of storm and sweat that lingers
- iron makes your hands tremble for a heartbeat—visible to watchful enemies

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Hostborn Innate Abilities

1) Flight Reflex

When danger snaps into motion, you move first.

- **Use:** react to ambush, break for cover, pull someone down, seize initiative.
- **Effect:** justifies Advantage on the first critical movement/avoidance roll in a sudden threat scene (Director discretion).

2) Corridor Sense

You feel the "shape" of a route—where it pinches, where it opens, where an ambush would sit.

- **Use:** pick safer routes quickly, spot bad terrain choices, predict pursuit positions.
- **Effect:** reduces random "gotcha" travel; replaces it with informed hard choices.

3) Escort Discipline

You can make a frightened group move as one.

- **Use:** keep refugees quiet, pace elders, coordinate through fog.
- **Effect:** prevents group chaos from becoming the true threat; often negates Disadvantage caused by panic.

4) Hard Mercy

You can do the necessary ugly thing without freezing.

- **Use:** cut a rope bridge behind you, abandon gear to save lives, silence a loud threat, choose who moves first.
- **Effect:** not a bonus—this is permission to act decisively without needing to roleplay paralysis. The consequence is emotional and political, not mechanical.

5) Wound-Bite

Hostborn don't just strike—they strike to end pursuit.

- **Use:** disable a pursuer's ability to chase (leg, gear, mount, morale).

- **Effect:** frames violence as practical rather than heroic; still uses normal combat resolution.
- **Narrative:** success should create escape windows; failure should tighten the net.

6) Storm-Heart

You keep functioning when fear spikes.

- **Use:** resist intimidation, keep fighting when outnumbered, continue moving injured.
- **Effect:** can justify Advantage on staying-the-course rolls; works well with Destiny.

7) The Runner's Claim

You can claim temporary authority in a crisis by invoking the corridor's need.

- **Use:** override local hesitation: "We move now," "We shelter them," "We don't argue here."
- **Effect:** changes social posture—people may resent you later, but they obey now.

WELLSPRING SÍDHE — Water Memory and Omen

Wellspring Sídhe are the keepers of water-witness: omen-readers, mistworkers, spirit-parleyers, and those who sense corruption before it becomes catastrophe. Their work is often subtle and terrifying because it involves truth people would rather not face.

Common Appearance Traits

Wellspring Sídhe often share:

- eyes that look reflective in low light
- a habit of pausing near water, even unconsciously
- tokens carried in pouches: stones, bowls, reeds, mirror shards
- voices that soften when speaking truths

Some appear damp even when dry, or smell faintly of rain.

Cultural Expectations

Wellspring Sídhe are expected to:

- maintain witness networks (wells, fords, bowls, story-lines)
- read rot signs and warn sanctuaries early
- negotiate with spirits and guardian presences
- carry uncomfortable truth without flinching

They are sought in crisis—and blamed when their truth hurts.

Typical Roles in Play

- investigator of blight and betrayal
- omen guide for route choices
- diplomatic witness in bargains
- spirit negotiator for cursed sites and broken halls

Wellspring Tells

- water ripples when you lie (or when someone lies near you)
- reflections behave oddly around you
- your presence makes fog gather more readily
- iron makes your teeth ache, and you swallow too often

Wellspring Sídhe Innate Abilities

1) Taste the Truth

You can sense emotional "flavor" in water and drink.

- **Use:** detect fear, grief, anger, rot-taint in a place or person (via offerings, cups, rain, ford water).
- **Effect:** prompts and warnings; can justify Advantage when investigating corruption or deception.
- **Contested:** if actively masked, resolve using an investigative/perception skill.

2) Mirror-Sense

You notice when reflections are wrong.

- **Use:** spot glamour residue, recognize a binding, detect a spirit presence, notice "stolen attention."

- **Effect:** early warning and clue generation.

3) Mist Familiarity

Fog and damp air feel like information.

- **Use:** navigate in low visibility, mask movement, read approaching pressure.
- **Effect:** can negate Disadvantage in fog or rain travel scenes—because you treat it as normal rather than a penalty.

4) Omen Thread

You can frame a choice with unsettling clarity.

- **Use:** "If we go that way, someone does not return," "This hall is hungry tonight."
- **Effect:** gives the Director permission to foreshadow consequences honestly without spoiling surprises.
- **Mechanics:** no roll required; it's a narrative tool. If you want uncertainty, the Director may call for an appropriate roll.

5) Spirit Courtesy

You know how to speak to the unseen without making it worse.

- **Use:** negotiate with minor spirits, appease a guardian, ask a question without provoking offense.
- **Effect:** allows "talking your way out" of supernatural hazards.
- **Contested:** resolve with the most relevant social/investigation skill.

6) Rot Alarm

You feel blight before others do.

- **Use:** detect early corruption signs in food, water, tokens, dreams, or sanctuary mood.
- **Effect:** you get the first move in a rot arc—at the cost of being the one who must convince others.

7) The Unforgiving Memory

You remember what others edit away.

- **Use:** recall a detail from a past scene that matters now; link patterns across time.
- **Effect:** helps investigation and politics; can be a source of social conflict when you refuse to "let it go."

HEARTHBOUND — Keepers of Inside

Hearthbound keep the People alive where it actually happens: in sleeping spaces, in food, in warmth, in morale, in wounds tended quietly, in wards that prevent panic and nightmares from destroying a refuge hall from within.

Hearthbound are the ones who know that survival isn't only fighting—it's **keeping the children asleep**.

Common Appearance Traits

Hearthbound often carry:

- practical pouches of herbs, salves, cord, small charms
- a faint scent of smoke, stew, or clean ash
- hands stained from work—healing, cooking, warding, mending
- eyes that watch people more than doors (they read emotion as threat)

Their presence often feels warm even in cold spaces—until iron is near, and then it feels like a room suddenly losing heat.

Cultural Expectations

Hearthbound are expected to:

- maintain refuge discipline and domestic stability
- heal, comfort, and keep the hall from turning against itself
- manage resources and difficult refuge decisions
- preserve hospitality even under strain

Hearthbound are often the moral spine of a sanctuary—and therefore suffer the sharpest moral injuries.

Typical Roles in Play

- healer, ward-keeper, refuge organizer
- mediator of panic and internal conflict

- keeper of safehouse procedures
- specialist in night threats (dream pressure, fear spirals, indoor rot)

Hearthbound Tells

- you instinctively check thresholds like a ritual
- your voice becomes too soothing, unnerving outsiders
- animals settle near you—or avoid you if you've recently broken hospitality
- iron makes the air around you feel "thin," like warmth can't hold

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Hearthbound Innate Abilities

1) Hearth Calm

You can settle a space—lowering panic and stabilizing breath.

- **Use:** calm a refuge hall, stop a fear spiral, steady someone before they break.
- **Effect:** can justify Advantage on social composure and recovery scenes; can prevent chaos from becoming the real threat.

2) Threshold Habit

You notice domestic wrongness quickly.

- **Use:** detect moved tokens, disturbed ash, signs of sabotage, early iron intrusion.
- **Effect:** early warning in sanctuary arcs; complements Moundborn threshold listening from a domestic angle.

3) Hands of Care

Your touch communicates safety.

- **Use:** comfort the injured, stabilize morale, make someone feel "inside" again.
- **Effect:** supports recovery scenes and relationship building; Destiny often fits when you refuse to let someone be lost.

4) Ward-Knowledge

You understand the basics of refuge ward culture whether or not you specialize in Hearthward School later.

- **Use:** maintain simple protections, reinforce routine ward practices, recognize when a ward has been tampered with.
- **Effect:** you can meaningfully participate in ward scenes without needing to be a dedicated magick specialist.

5) Ration Wisdom

You know how to make little stretch without breaking spirits.

- **Use:** manage supplies, prevent resentment, keep refugees functional.
- **Effect:** turns "we're out of food" into a playable problem rather than a campaign-ender.

6) Nightwatch Instinct

You sense when sleep is becoming dangerous.

- **Use:** detect nightmare pressure, restless hall moods, signs of dream intrusion.
- **Effect:** triggers investigation scenes early; keeps horror subtle and slow rather than sudden and unfair.

7) Hospitality Spine

You can enforce hospitality boundaries without cruelty.

- **Use:** remove a disruptive guest, set firm rules, protect vulnerable people under guest-right.
- **Effect:** allows sanctuary scenes to have teeth and order. On failure, the cost is social fracture, not "nothing happens."

BEASTMARKED — Totem and Wild Corridor

Beastmarked are tied to the living island: totem lines, wild corridors, senses sharpened by pact, and a relationship with animal-forms that is not costume but identity. They are

guardians, scouts, trackers, and sometimes the frightening reminder that the Sídhe are not purely "courtly."

Common Appearance Traits

Beastmarked often show subtle physical echoes:

- eyes that catch light like an animal's
- hair texture or coloration reminiscent of totem line (dark feather-gloss, tawny streaks, winter-pale)
- a habitual stillness, like a creature listening
- scars that look like claw marks even when they aren't

Their presence can make animals react: curiosity, fear, or recognition.

Editor's Note: A beastmarked player character should select a specific woodland/wild animal type as their totem. This choice will help with both physical features, as well as role-play aspects of the character.

Cultural Expectations

Beastmarked are expected to:

- guard wild corridors and keep routes alive outside human roads
- enforce pact customs and respect taboo spaces
- track threats through wilderness
- respond when the land itself "calls" through omen behavior

Beastmarked are often treated as both protectors and unsettling outsiders. They are closest to the wild—and therefore sometimes closest to the fear others don't want to admit.

Typical Roles in Play

- corridor guardian and tracker
- companion to refuge runs through wilderness
- negotiator with "in-between" presences
- the one who can become an animal when the world needs a different shape

Beastmarked Tells

- animals stare at you too long
- birds gather near you before trouble
- your scent changes with emotion
- iron makes you bare your teeth involuntarily

Beastmarked Innate Abilities

1) Totem Senses

Your senses sharpen when you commit attention.

- **Use:** track by scent, hear distant movement, notice subtle shifts in wind and bird behavior.
- **Effect:** can justify Advantage on awareness/tracking scenes when the environment matters.

2) Wild Corridor Memory

You remember the land's paths the way others remember streets.

- **Use:** navigate off-road, find hidden passes, avoid bog traps, locate old sanctuary approaches.
- **Effect:** makes wilderness travel playable and purposeful rather than random hazard.

3) Beast-Shape (Minor Form)

You can take a limited animal-form tied to your totem line (a "small truth" shape).

- **Use:** scouting, slipping through narrow spaces, moving quietly, escaping pursuit.
- **Effect:** grants permission to solve problems as an animal.
- **Limits (fictional):** you remain *you*; the form is not perfect disguise if examined closely.
- **Note:** deeper and more versatile shapechanging belongs to the Beastpact School (via Sídhe Magick). This innate is the "birthright version."

4) Pact Courtesy

You know how to treat wild presences with respect.

- **Use:** avoid provoking territorial spirits/guardians, offer correctly, interpret animal behavior as message.

- **Effect:** prevents wilderness scenes from turning into pointless fights.

5) Predator Stillness

You can become frighteningly still—vanishing in plain terrain.

- **Use:** ambush, hide in reeds or brush, wait without fidget.
- **Effect:** often negates Disadvantage in "imperfect cover" situations; if contested, roll stealth.

6) The Land's Warning

Sometimes the island warns you first.

- **Use:** sense a storm shift, a wrong silence, an approaching threat.
- **Effect:** gives you a moment to act before the net closes; the Director should honor this by offering a choice rather than a surprise "gotcha."

7) Feral Surge

When someone threatens your "inside" (your sanctuary, your bonded, your protected), your body answers.

- **Use:** a burst of speed, strength, or grit in a protective moment.
- **Effect:** can justify Advantage on a single urgent protective act—especially rescue or interception.
- **Cost (fictional):** it's a tell. People remember the moment your humanity slipped.

Using Lineages at the Table (Practical Advice)

1) Don't hoard your innates

Innates are there to make you feel Lineage-first. Use them. Let them create tells. That's the campaign.

2) Innates are not "spells"

They are instincts, permissions, and cultural power. When they're dramatic, they're dramatic because **the situation is dramatic**, not because you shot a fireball.

3) When a roll is needed, keep it simple

If it's uncertain or opposed, roll the most relevant skill. If the Protagonist's approach is clever or well-positioned, grant Advantage. If iron, panic, exposure, or contradiction is in play, apply Disadvantage. Destiny stays Destiny.

4) Lineage does not lock your profession

Your profession is what you invest in: skills, relationships, vows, and the single Sídhe Magick path you develop. Later in Book 1, you'll get **two profession packs per Lineage** to showcase common builds.

CHAPTER 5: SKILLS OF ÉIRE

Skills are the practical expression of your Protagonist: what you can do under pressure, what you trained for, what you learned in sanctuary work, on routes, or in courts. In *The Fading*, skills remain **d100 values** exactly as in One-on-One, and you still resolve uncertainty with the core engine: roll d100, compare to your **modified skill value**, apply **Advantage/Disadvantage** where appropriate, and spend **Destiny** when the story demands it.

This module adds one major creation overlay: **Skill Bases from Attributes**. After that, everything behaves like One-on-One.

Skill Rules Summary

1) Skills are d100

A skill is a percentage rating. When you attempt something uncertain, you roll **d100** against your **modified skill value** for that skill.

2) No Target Numbers

There are no fixed TNs in *The Fading*. Your "target" is your **skill value after modifications**.

3) Skill Bases from Attributes (Module Rule)

As established in Book I Chapter 1:

Skill Base = ⌊**Linked Attribute** ÷ **2**⌋ (round down)

Example: Awareness 61 ⟶ AWR-linked skill base is 30.

4) Skill Points Pool (Module Rule)

At creation you have **200 Skill Points** to distribute. Each point increases a skill by **+1%**.

5) Starting Cap (Recommended)

To preserve growth: **no skill begins above 70%** at creation unless the Director explicitly allows it.

6) Modifiers and Tags

Below, each skill entry includes **common uses** and **suggested situational modifiers** (typically ±10 or ±20). These modifiers adjust your **modified skill value** before rolling, and they stack with normal Advantage/Disadvantage judgment where the Director deems it appropriate.

- **+10** = notably favorable positioning, strong tool use, clear leverage
- **−10** = difficult conditions, mild pressure, imperfect information
- **+20** / **−20** = major leverage or major hardship (iron presence, storms, panic, rushed work, etc.)

Director note: Treat these as guidance. The One-on-One engine is fiction-first; if the fiction already grants Advantage/Disadvantage strongly, you don't need to pile on every small modifier.

7) Specialist Skills

Some skills are labeled **[Specialist]** and tied to non-Sídhe cultures (Gaels, Fir Bolg, Fomorians) or to rare bodies of knowledge. Sídhe *can* learn them in play, but they usually require:

- a teacher, captivity, long study, or deep contact
- a compelling narrative reason

- Director approval at character creation if you want them immediately

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Sídhe Skill List

Athletics (Might) — [Physical, Travel]

Athletics is climbing with gear, hauling someone out of water, forcing your body through pain, and keeping pace when the route doesn't care about your fatigue. It covers raw exertion and the ugly physical work of survival that keeps sanctuaries supplied and people alive.

- Sprint a short distance (+10 with clear ground; –20 in deep mud or snow)
- Climb rough stone (+10 with rope/anchor; –20 in rain or while pursued)
- Leap gaps and broken ground (+10 with a running start; –20 if carrying someone)
- Force a stuck door or gate (+10 with leverage tool; –20 if iron hardware is biting your hands)
- Swim a hard ford (+10 with calm water; –20 in cold current or storm surge)

Brawling (Might) — [Combat, Close]

Brawling is grappling, clinches, knee-and-elbow fighting, pins, and the violence that happens when blades aren't drawn or don't matter. It also covers restraint—subduing someone without killing them.

- Grapple and restrain (+10 if you surprise them; –20 if outnumbered)
- Knockdown or shove (+10 with solid footing; –20 on slick stone)
- Break free of a hold (+10 with leverage; –20 if exhausted or wounded)
- Subdue without injury (–10 because it's careful; +10 if the target is panicked)
- Fight in tight spaces (+10 if you can use walls; –20 if cramped by a crowd)

Melee Weapons (Might) — [Combat, Melee]

This is the use of non-iron blades, clubs, spears, and improvised weapons—the practical violence of the Sídhe in a world where iron is a threat. It includes stance, distance control, and finishing quickly to prevent pursuit.

- Strike decisively (+10 if you have reach/position; –20 if rushed or off-balance)
- Fight defensively (+10 if you hold a choke point; –10 if flanked)
- Disarm or control a weapon arm (–10; +10 if the opponent is overextended)
- Fight in darkness (+10 if you have practiced cues; –20 if you can't read movement)
- Nonlethal takedown (–10; +10 if you have allies to help restrain)

Thrown Weapons (Grace) — [Combat, Ranged]

Thrown Weapons covers knives, stones, darts, and quick improvised throws made on the run. It's often the Sídhe's "quiet ranged answer" when bows would draw too much attention.

- Quick throw in close range (+10 if within a few strides; –20 at longer range)
- Throw from concealment (+10 if unseen; –20 if you're being watched)
- Hit a moving target (–10; –20 if sprinting or zig-zagging)
- Create a distraction throw (+10 if the environment is noisy; –20 in silent halls)
- Throw while running (–10; +10 if you had time to set your grip)

Archery (Grace) — [Combat, Ranged]

Archery is precision at distance: hunting, ambush, deterrent volleys, and the skill of placing a shot under motion. It's also restraint—knowing when not to shoot because the sound of pursuit matters more than a kill.

- Shoot at distance; called shots (Director may impose –10/–20)
- Fire from concealment (+10 if unseen; –20 if rushed)

- Long-range shots (–10/–20 by distance and wind)
- Volley fire to drive enemies back (+10 if target area is crowded)
- Hunt small game (+10 with clear sign; –10 in rain)
- Shoot from horseback (–20 unless trained; +10 if stable mount and time)

Stealth (Grace) — [Travel, Infiltration]

Stealth is moving without being noticed, controlling noise, masking presence, and using terrain to become uninteresting. In *The Fading*, it's often less about "being invisible" and more about being **plausible**.

- Move quietly past watchers (+10 with cover; –20 on dry leaves or gravel)
- Hide in imperfect terrain (+10 in fog/reeds; –10 in open ground)
- Tail someone unseen (–10; –20 if they're cautious or hounds are present)
- Infiltrate a settlement (+10 with a cover story; –20 if you look out of place)
- Stay motionless through scrutiny (+10 with patience; –20 if injured or shivering)

Acrobatics (Grace) — [Physical, Mobility]

Acrobatics is balance, controlled falls, quick vaults, and the ability to keep precision under motion. It's the skill of surviving the island's broken places without turning every chase into injury.

- Balance across narrow footing (+10 with a staff; –20 in rain or wind)
- Vault obstacles (+10 with room to run; –20 if carrying gear/child)
- Controlled fall (+10 if you can roll; –20 onto jagged stone)
- Quick evasions (+10 if you see it coming; –20 if surprised)
- Move through tight spaces (+10 if unarmored; –20 if bulky or bound)

Sleight & Knots (Grace) — [Practical, Subtle]

This skill covers knot craft, fast bindings, palming tokens, hidden pockets, and the quiet competence that makes Sídhe life work. It's how cords become keys and how a small trick prevents a big scene.

- Tie secure knots quickly (+10 with proper cord; –20 if rushed or wet)
- Conceal a token on your person (+10 with layered clothing; –20 if searched)
- Slip a binding or loosen a knot (–10; +10 if you can work unseen)
- Quick-craft a simple snare (+10 with clear sign; –20 on bad ground)
- Pick simple latches (–10; –20 if rusted/iron-heavy and painful to touch)

Survival (Endurance) — [Travel, Wilderness]

Survival is staying alive in bad conditions: shelter, fire, water safety, pacing, and refusing to die from "small" mistakes. It also covers making correct choices when fatigue is doing its best to make you stupid.

- Endure exposure (+10 with shelter materials; –20 in storm or deep winter)
- Build a quick refuge (+10 with tools; –20 if time is measured in breaths)
- Keep a group functional (+10 with discipline; –20 if panic spreads)
- Safe water and food choices (+10 with known source; –20 if taint/rot suspected)
- Night travel endurance (+10 with rest plan; –20 if wounded or chased)

Foraging (Endurance) — [Wilderness, Sustenance]

Foraging is finding edible plants, safe water, small game opportunities, and usable materials without wasting time. In this setting it also includes recognizing subtle signs of blight in food and water.

- Gather edible plants (+10 in known region; –20 in winter scarcity)

- Locate clean water (+10 with streams/wells known; –20 in drought or rot zones)
- Set small traps (+10 with time; –20 if rushed)
- Butcher and preserve (+10 with salt/smoke; –20 without tools)
- Recognize spoiled food (+10 with clear smell/taste; –20 if masked by spices or fear)

Endure Pain (Endurance) — [Resilience]

This is grit: staying functional while injured, resisting panic responses, and pushing through exhaustion when stopping means death. It's not "being tough" for show; it's being able to keep moving when your body disagrees.

- Continue a task while wounded (+10 with rest and binding; –20 if bleeding or iron-sick)
- Resist fear-induced freezing (+10 with training; –20 when surprised and alone)
- Hold breath / resist choking (+10 with preparation; –20 if restrained)
- Stay conscious under stress (+10 with support; –20 if starvation or cold is severe)
- Force a last push (+10 if protecting someone; –20 if despair has set in)

Tracking (Awareness) — [Wilderness, Pursuit]

Tracking is reading the land: footprints, broken reeds, disturbed birds, scent lines, and the subtle "shape" of movement. It also includes counter-tracking—knowing what you reveal and how to spoil it.

- Follow clear sign (+10 on soft ground; –20 on stone or in heavy rain)
- Track through mixed terrain (–10; –20 if days old)
- Spot an ambush trail (+10 if you know enemy habits; –20 if you're rushed)
- Counter-track to hide your route (+10 with time; –20 if pursued closely)
- Read hound behavior (+10 if you've seen trained hounds before; –20 if multiple packs)

Notice (Awareness) — [Perception, Vigilance]

Notice is spotting what doesn't belong: the nail in the lintel, the too-clean salt line, the watcher who pretends not to watch. It's the skill that keeps the net from closing without warning.

- Spot hidden danger (+10 with calm scan; –20 in chaos or crowds)
- Detect a tail (–10; –20 if they're trained and you're stressed)
- Read a room for exits (+10 in a quiet space; –20 in a packed hall)
- Notice subtle tampering (+10 with familiarity; –20 if expertly concealed)
- Hear movement in bad visibility (+10 in silence; –20 in wind, rain, or song)

Insight (Awareness) — [Social, Reading]

Insight is reading people's attention, fear, deception tells, and the emotional weather of a room. It's less "mind reading" and more noticing what someone is trying not to show.

- Read motive (+10 with conversation time; –20 if they're disciplined)
- Spot deception (+10 if stakes are clear; –20 if you want to believe them)
- Sense panic spread (+10 in a small group; –20 in a crowd)
- Identify who holds authority (+10 with context; –20 in unfamiliar culture)
- Recognize coerced behavior (+10 if you know them well; –20 if you just met)

Navigation (Intellect) — [Travel, Routes]

Navigation is route memory: landmarks, safe corridors, ford timing, and the practical map in your head. It also covers understanding how roads and settlements reshape movement over time.

- Choose a safe route (+10 with local knowledge; –20 if terrain changed or stormed)

- Avoid patrol patterns (+10 with intel; –20 if patrols just shifted)
- Time a ford crossing (+10 with calm water; –20 in flood season)
- Find hidden approaches (+10 with prior scouting; –20 if visibility is poor)
- Maintain bearings in fog (+10 with landmarks; –20 in featureless bog)

Investigation (Intellect) — [Lore, Clues]

Investigation is turning clues into answers: comparing details, testing assumptions, and building a chain of cause. In *The Fading*, it's essential for rot mysteries, infiltration, and court betrayals.

- Reconstruct events from traces (+10 with time; –20 if scene is contaminated)
- Cross-check testimonies (+10 with multiple witnesses; –20 if fear silences them)
- Identify the "wrong" object (+10 with familiarity; –20 if everything is strange)
- Follow a paper/record trail (+10 with access; –20 if records are guarded or destroyed)
- Notice pattern in repeated incidents (+10 with notes; –20 if sleep-deprived)

Lore: The Sídhe (Intellect) — [Lore, Culture]

This is your people's deep memory: courts, customs, sanctuaries, tokens, witness places, and the unspoken rules. It's how you avoid insulting allies and how you recognize when someone is lying about being "inside."

- Identify a court token (+10 if common; –20 if ancient or altered)
- Recall etiquette correctly (+10 with time; –20 under accusation pressure)
- Recognize old sanctuary signs (+10 if region-known; –20 if displaced)
- Interpret witness significance (+10 at a known site; –20 at a corrupted site)
- Spot counterfeit customs (+10 if you've traveled; –20 if the faker is skilled)

Lore: Gaels & the Waking World (Intellect) — [Lore, Human]

This skill covers Gaelic social structures, laws, church power, settlement growth, and how human fear spreads. It's the knowledge that prevents you from treating humans as simple enemies.

- Read a lord's priorities (+10 with observation; –20 if politics are layered)
- Understand clerical influence (+10 with context; –20 if new sect/abbot)
- Predict settlement behavior (+10 if resources are scarce; –20 if rumor drives panic)
- Know human travel norms (+10 on roads; –20 off-road or in raids)
- Pass as "not worth notice" (+10 with appropriate behavior; –20 if you look strange)

Crafting (Intellect) — [Practical, Trade]

Crafting is making and repairing: tools, clothing, cordwork, simple weapons, containers, and the small fixes that keep movement possible. It's not artistry alone—it's survival production.

- Repair gear (+10 with proper tools; –20 if improvised)
- Make a simple tool (+10 with materials; –20 if time is short)
- Jury-rig a solution (+10 if clever; –20 if under immediate threat)
- Maintain non-iron weapons (+10 with routine; –20 if damaged badly)
- Identify weak points in gear (+10 with inspection; –20 if hidden or rushed)

Tokencraft (Intellect) — [Sídhe, Subtle]

Tokencraft is the Sídhe practice of making meaning portable: cords that signify passage, toggles that mark belonging, small objects that carry witness. It's the craft-side of survival culture.

- Create a recognized token (+10 with known pattern; –20 if inventing a new one)

- Alter a token without breaking meaning (−10; −20 if the token is high-status)
- Read a token's intended message (+10 if familiar; −20 if it's coded)
- Hide a message in cordwork (+10 with time; −20 if rushed)
- Spot a forged token (+10 if you've handled the real; −20 if the forgery is masterful)

Healing (Intellect) — [Hearth, Care]

Healing is practical medicine: cleaning wounds, splinting, treating sickness, and preventing panic from turning injury into death. It's also recognizing when a problem is not physical—when a "wound" is fear, rot, or iron-sickness.

- Stabilize an injured person (+10 with supplies; −20 if battlefield conditions)
- Treat infection (+10 with herbs/clean water; −20 if resources are scarce)
- Set bone or splint (+10 with help; −20 if alone and rushed)
- Diagnose sickness (+10 with time; −20 if symptoms are masked)
- Calm pain and shock (+10 with safe shelter; −20 if the threat is still present)

Herbalism (Intellect) — [Wilderness, Craft]

Herbalism is identifying plants, preparing poultices, brewing simple remedies, and knowing what the land offers in each season. It also includes recognizing poisoned or blighted growth.

- Identify useful plants (+10 in season; −20 out of season or in unfamiliar region)
- Prepare a poultice (+10 with tools; −20 if rushed)
- Brew a remedy (+10 with correct ingredients; −20 if substitutes are forced)
- Recognize blight in flora (+10 with experience; −20 if subtle early-stage)
- Create a mild sedative (+10 with proper dose; −20 if the subject is panicked)

Persuasion (Presence) — [Social, Influence]

Persuasion is moving someone toward your outcome without breaking the relationship—often by offering dignity, plausible benefit, or shared survival. It's essential in Éire because war is costly and bargains are everywhere.

- Negotiate terms (+10 with leverage/token; −20 if you're desperate)
- Calm a fearful crowd (+10 if you're trusted; −20 if rumors have primed them)
- Convince a guard to allow passage (+10 with a cover story; −20 if alert is high)
- Ask for sanctuary aid (+10 with shared witness; −20 if you arrive with trouble)
- Secure a compromise (+10 if both lose a little; −20 if pride is in play)

Deception (Presence) — [Social, Subterfuge]

Deception is lies, half-truths, omissions, and believable masks—not just what you say, but what you let others assume. In *The Fading*, deception is often mercy: hiding refugees, protecting names, and keeping sanctuaries alive.

- Maintain a cover story (+10 if simple; −20 if complex under questioning)
- Lie under pressure (−10; −20 if witness sites are involved)
- Create plausible misdirection (+10 with props; −20 if improvised)
- Fake belonging (+10 with correct token; −20 if your tell is showing)
- Hide emotion (+10 if trained; −20 if exhausted or grief-struck)

Command (Presence) — [Social, Leadership]

Command is directing action in crisis: making people move, enforcing discipline, and turning panic into procedure. It's not "being loud"—it's being believed when the moment is sharp.

- Rally allies (+10 if they trust you; −20 if morale is broken)

- Coordinate a retreat (+10 with clear route; –20 if surrounded)
- Enforce sanctuary rules (+10 with witness; –20 if the hall is divided)
- Give tactical orders (+10 if practiced; –20 if chaos blocks communication)
- Stop a fight before it spreads (+10 if respected; –20 if grudges are old)

Etiquette (Presence) — [Court, Culture]

Etiquette is courtesy practice: how to enter, how to offer, how to seat, how to speak in a hall without triggering offense. It's the skill that prevents political scenes from exploding before they begin.

- Make a correct approach (+10 if you know the court; –20 if it's unfamiliar)
- Offer gifts appropriately (+10 with suitable token; –20 if offering is insulting)
- Speak without violating taboo (+10 with preparation; –20 if challenged suddenly)
- Read seating and status (+10 in a formal hall; –20 in mixed/chaotic gatherings)
- Navigate guest-right politics (+10 if calm; –20 if accusations fly)

Intimidation (Presence) — [Social, Pressure]

Intimidation is threat with control: voice, stillness, and implication. In *The Fading*, intimidation often works best when it's quiet—because loud threats create attention.

- Apply pressure without shouting (+10 if you have leverage; –20 if bluffing)
- Threaten violence credibly (+10 with reputation; –20 if you look weak or trapped)
- Break someone's resolve (–10; –20 if they're fanatical)
- Force a retreat (+10 if you control terrain; –20 if outnumbered)
- Interrogate a captive (+10 if time; –20 if witness makes cruelty costly)

Hospitality (Presence) — [Hearth, Law]

Hospitality is the practice of guest-right: offering shelter correctly, enforcing rules without cruelty, and understanding what welcome implies. It's a core Sídhe survival skill because sanctuaries are networks, not fortresses.

- Grant or deny guest-right wisely (+10 with counsel; –20 if rushed and afraid)
- Detect a guest-right trap (+10 if wary; –20 if you desperately want help)
- Keep a hall stable (+10 with routine; –20 if resources are scarce)
- Enforce boundaries (+10 if witness is present; –20 if the hall is divided)
- Repair a hospitality breach (+10 with a meaningful offering; –20 if blood has been spilled)

Riding (Grace) — [Travel, Mount]

Riding is controlling a mount in stress: speed, terrain reading, and keeping balance with hands free for tools or weapons. Even in a mythic Éire, horses and hardy mounts shape pursuit and escape.

- Ride at speed (+10 on good ground; –20 in bog or rocky slopes)
- Control a panicked mount (–10; –20 if wounded or startled by iron)
- Fight from a mount (–20 unless trained; +10 if stable footing and time)
- Handle long rides (+10 with pacing; –20 with injury or poor saddle)
- Dismount safely while moving (+10 if practiced; –20 if rushed)

Boating (Grace) — [Travel, Water]

Boating covers small craft: punts, coracles, river crossings, coastal skims, and the practical sense of water as a route. It's vital when roads are watched and fords are traps.

- Cross a river safely (+10 in calm water; –20 in flood or storm)
- Land quietly (+10 in reeds/fog; –20 on exposed shore)

- Navigate by shoreline (+10 with landmarks; –20 in heavy mist)
- Handle sudden capsizing risk (+10 if trained; –20 if burdened with cargo)
- Keep passengers calm (+10 if disciplined; –20 if panicked)

Tactics (Intellect) — [Combat, Planning]

Tactics is planning conflict: reading terrain, predicting enemy behavior, and choosing when not to fight. It's the skill of surviving a war you cannot win by brute force.

- Identify choke points (+10 with scouting; –20 if unfamiliar)
- Plan an ambush (+10 with time; –20 if rushed)
- Execute a retreat (+10 with clear route; –20 if morale collapses)
- Predict pursuit routes (+10 with intel; –20 if enemies are unpredictable)
- Coordinate mixed allies (+10 with trust; –20 with rival factions present)

Sídhe Magick (Intellect) — [Mystic, Specialist]

Sídhe Magick is the single skill that governs your ability to perform **General Fae Magick** and to practice **one** Magick School deeply (Glamour, Oathcraft, Hollow Ways, Hearthward, Well & Mirror, or Beastpact). It is not "wizard spellcasting"—it is witness, tokens, courtesy, and the shaping of attention and boundaries; it always draws on **Essence** when you attempt workings (details in Part III).

- Sense magical workings (+10 with proper tokens; –20 in noisy chaos or iron-heavy spaces)
- Shape subtle effects (+10 with time and calm; –20 if rushed or panicked)
- Counter a working's influence (+10 if prepared; –20 if surprised)
- Channel through a tool (+10 with a proper implement; –10 if improvised)
- Sustain concentration (+10 if safe and steady; –20 if wounded or threatened)
- Work under witness (+10 at a recognized site; –20 if the place is spoiled or contested)

Reminder: Every Sídhe has access to General Fae Magick in principle, but your **effectiveness** is governed by your Sídhe Magick skill rating. You may know **only one School** total.

Specialist Skills and Variants (Culture-Tied)

These skills represent bodies of knowledge typically belonging to Gaels, Fir Bolg remnants, or Fomorian strains. A Sídhe can learn them, but it usually requires deep contact, captivity, long study, or a narrative reason. At character creation, take these only with Director approval.

Brehon Law (Intellect) — [Specialist, Human]

Brehon Law is Gaelic legal tradition: compensation, status, kin obligations, and how disputes are formalized. It's how you exploit or survive human justice systems without pretending they're simple.

- Interpret a legal claim (+10 with documents/witness; –20 if the judge is biased)
- Predict a lord's ruling (+10 with context; –20 if politics override law)
- Build a compensation bargain (+10 with leverage; –20 if you are the outsider)
- Spot a legal trap (–10; –20 if it's layered in custom)
- Use law to delay violence (+10 if public; –20 if the crowd is already panicking)

Church Rite & Sanctification (Presence) — [Specialist, Human]

This covers Gaelic religious authority structures, consecration practices, bell politics, and the social power of sanctifiers. It does not grant "holy magic" by default; it grants knowledge and social technique.

- Recognize a rite in progress (+10 if familiar; –20 if regional variation)
- Predict what a sanctifier will do next (+10 with observation; –20 if secretive)

- Disrupt a ceremony socially (+10 with scandal leverage; –20 if protected by armed men)
- Pass as "acceptable" in a sacred space (+10 with correct behavior; –20 if your tell shows)
- Identify a bell project's intent (+10 with intel; –20 if hidden behind charity work)

Ironcraft (Intellect) — [Specialist, Human, Trade]

Ironcraft is smithing, ironworking, and understanding iron tools and traps—how they're built, hidden, and deployed. Most Sídhe avoid this knowledge, but some learn it to survive.

- Identify an iron trap (+10 with inspection; –20 if disguised)
- Disable iron hardware safely (+10 with tools; –20 if rushed or in pain)
- Predict how a nail-circle works (+10 with experience; –20 if ritualized)
- Find weak points in a gate or chain (+10 with leverage; –20 if guarded)
- Handle iron without freezing (–10; –20 if prolonged contact is required)

Cairn Code (Awareness) — [Specialist, Fir Bolg]

Fir Bolg cairns are not just stones—they're messages, warnings, claims, and challenges. Cairn Code lets you read and lay those messages correctly.

- Read a cairn's claim (+10 if intact; –20 if weathered or tampered)
- Lay a warning cairn (+10 with correct stones; –20 if rushed)
- Spot a false cairn (–10; –20 if the mimic is skilled)
- Predict Fir Bolg movement (+10 with multiple markers; –20 with conflicting signs)
- Use cairns to negotiate (+10 with respect; –20 if tensions are high)

Stone-Right (Might) — [Specialist, Fir Bolg]

Stone-Right is the embodied Fir Bolg discipline of moving, setting, and claiming with stone: boundary enforcement, cairn building under pressure, and physical work that carries legal meaning to them.

- Set a boundary marker (+10 with time; –20 if contested)
- Move stone fast (+10 with helpers; –20 if exhausted)
- Use stonework defensively (+10 in rocky terrain; –20 in soft bog)
- Recognize a claimed place (+10 with markers present; –20 if old/hidden)
- Challenge a claim physically (–10; –20 if you don't know their customs)

Brine-Craft (Presence) — [Specialist, Fomorian]

Brine-Craft is knowledge of Fomorian corruptive offerings: sour gifts, coastal strain habits, and how brine tokens bind attention and rot morale. It does not make you Fomorian—it makes you dangerous in understanding them.

- Recognize a brine gift (+10 with smell/taste cues; –20 if masked)
- Predict strain behavior (+10 with history; –20 if a new brood)
- Handle a corrupt token safely (+10 with proper containment; –20 if iron is nearby and you're shaken)
- Identify rot spread vectors (+10 with multiple clues; –20 early-stage subtlety)
- Negotiate with a corrupter (–10; –20 if they offer what you secretly want)

Dream-Pressure Reading (Awareness) — [Specialist, Fomorian]

This skill reflects the ability to recognize and map nightmare patterns, intrusive dreams, and sleep-based predation. It is rare for Sídhe to formalize this knowledge, but it exists among those who fight rot.

- Identify an intrusive dream pattern (+10 with repeated nights; –20 if it's new)

- Separate fear from influence (+10 with calm reflection; –20 if exhausted)
- Recognize a "hook" dream (+10 if you know the victim; –20 if strangers)
- Predict next-night escalation (+10 with notes; –20 if the rot is adaptive)
- Contain panic after a nightmare (+10 with support; –20 if the hall is stressed)

Using Skills in Play (Quick Guidance)

- **Roll when it matters.** If failure would change the scene, roll; otherwise narrate competence.
- **Let fiction choose modifiers.** Tokens, witness, sanctuary positioning, concealment, iron presence, storms, and social stakes are your primary modifier sources.
- **Use Consequences and Clocks.** When a roll fails, the result should push the story: a consequence, a complication, or advancement of an appropriate Clock.

CHAPTER 6: LINEAGE PROFESSION PACKS

These Profession Packs are **fast-build guides**. They are not new "classes," and they do not change any One-on-One mechanics. Your **Lineage** already functions as your archetype through its predetermined innate abilities. Profession Packs simply show you how many Sídhe tend to develop a "job shape" inside that Lineage by investing skill points, choosing anchors, and deciding whether **Sídhe Magick** is central or secondary.

Each Lineage below has **two** packs:

- a widely recognizable "common role" within the Lineage
- a contrasting role that shows a different play style

How to Use a Profession Pack

1. Choose the pack that matches your concept.
2. Use its **Attribute priorities** as a guide for your normal One-on-One Attribute generation method.
3. Allocate your **200 Skill Points** after applying your **Skill Bases from Attributes** (Book I Chapter 1).
4. Select a **single Magick School** only if you invest in **Sídhe Magick** (you always have General Fae Magick access in principle, but the skill rating governs effectiveness).
5. Choose the pack's suggested **anchors** (sanctuary tie, vow/taboo, tell, key relationship).
6. Record Destiny per One-on-One core (these packs suggest what Destiny often *feels like* for that concept).

Reminder: There are no TNs. Any listed ±10/±20 suggestions are situational modifiers that adjust the **modified skill value** before rolling.

COURT-SÍDHE PROFESSION PACKS

Court-Sídhe Diplomat — *"The Living Treaty"*

You are sent where words can prevent blood. You know how to make Gael lords feel respected while still protecting Sídhe interests, and you can keep a hall from tearing itself apart during accusation. You are the one who speaks under witness and survives the consequences.

Attribute Priorities: PRE first, then INT; AWR third.
Core Skills to Invest In (suggested focus):

- Persuasion (PRE) — primary tool of survival
- Etiquette (PRE) — prevents negotiations from detonating
- Lore: Gaels & the Waking World (INT) — read the human machine
- Insight (AWR) — catch deception, fear, coercion
- Hospitality (PRE) — guest-right done correctly is power
- Investigation (INT) — when "diplomacy" becomes a rot mystery

Optional: Command (PRE) for crisis leadership

Sídhe Magick (Optional): If taken, choose **Oathcraft** (most common) or **Glamour** (for soft plausibility work). Keep it subtle—your job is outcomes, not spectacle.

Tools & Tokens: court token of standing (cord, ring, torc fragment), a small offering kit (salt, milk-cake, bronze sliver), a "speaking cord" (knotcord used to mark clauses), and a non-iron blade for emergencies.

Anchors:

- Sanctuary tie: "I am the voice of my refuge network."
- Vow: "I will not let guest-right be reduced to a trick."
- Taboo: "I will not speak binding terms without witness."
- Tell: people repeat your phrases later, even when they don't remember you well.

Role in Play: negotiation scenes, political pressure, preventing raids, securing passage, keeping alliances alive.
Failure Consequence Style: your failures usually **advance attention** or create **new enemies**, rather than immediate physical harm.

Court-Sídhe Sanctioner — *"The One Who Names the Breach"*

You enforce the rules that keep Sídhe society from collapsing. When hospitality is violated or a sanctuary betrays its purpose, you are sent to name it, contain it, and decide what must be paid to keep the People intact.

Attribute Priorities: PRE first, AWR second, INT third.
Core Skills to Invest In:

- Command (PRE) — control crisis and enforce decisions
- Hospitality (PRE) — knowing the line between mercy and collapse
- Insight (AWR) — detect lies, coerced compliance
- Investigation (INT) — reconstruct breach details and culpability
- Intimidation (PRE) — quiet pressure when persuasion fails
- Lore: The Sídhe (INT) — precedent and taboo memory
  Optional: Persuasion (PRE) for "soft landings" after hard rulings

Sídhe Magick (Optional): If taken, choose **Oathcraft** (sanction and binding language) or **Well & Mirror** (truth-seeing, omen corroboration).

Tools & Tokens: sanction cord (black thread), witness stone, sealing wax/clay substitute, small bowl for offerings, non-iron sidearm.

Anchors:

- Sanctuary tie: "My sanctuary survived because someone held the line."
- Vow: "I will keep the People from eating itself."
- Taboo: "I will not allow a breach to be buried for comfort."
- Tell: your presence makes conversations quiet; even allies stop joking.

Role in Play: internal politics, hard moral decisions, breach investigations, preventing faction fracture.
Failure Consequence Style: social fallout, sanctuary distrust, splinter groups—these become **Clocks** that tick.

MOUNDBORN PROFESSION PACKS

Veilrunner Courier — *"The Thread Between Sanctuaries"*

You carry messages, tokens, and people through watched land. You know how to move without being memorable, and you understand that the road is never neutral. You're the one who arrives exhausted with a package that changes everything.

Attribute Priorities: GRC first, AWR second, END third.
Core Skills to Invest In:

- Stealth (GRC) — your primary survival tool
- Notice (AWR) — detect traps, tails, and attention shifts
- Navigation (INT) — route choices keep you alive (even with modest INT)
- Survival (END) — weather and exposure are enemies too

- Sleight & Knots (GRC) — tokens, bindings, quick fixes
- Tracking (AWR) — especially counter-tracking
  Optional: Acrobatics (GRC) for chase scenes

Sídhe Magick (Optional): If taken, choose **Hollow Ways** (rare but powerful for runners) or **Glamour** (to soften attention). Keep it minimal—open magick draws pursuit.

Tools & Tokens: route cord, hidden-pocket cloak, small mirror shard, a "false token" set, non-iron knife.

Anchors:

- Sanctuary tie: "I know three refuges that only exist because I kept their routes quiet."
- Vow: "I will not abandon a passenger."
- Taboo: "I will not sleep in a place with iron in the lintel."
- Tell: your footprints vanish too quickly in damp soil.

Role in Play: travel arcs, pursuit scenes, infiltration, courier mysteries.
Failure Consequence Style: lost time, compromised routes, attention escalation.

Hallwright Concealer — *"The One Who Makes Inside"*

You build and maintain the hidden spaces: safehouse discipline, token systems, and the quiet architecture of secrecy. You are the reason a sanctuary functions like a body instead of a rumor.

Attribute Priorities: INT first, AWR second, PRE third (quiet authority).
Core Skills to Invest In:

- Tokencraft (INT) — meaning made portable and secure
- Investigation (INT) — find infiltration patterns and compromise
- Notice (AWR) — early warning inside "safe" places
- Crafting (INT) — repairs, concealment structures, hidden storage
- Deception (PRE) — keeping cover stories consistent
- Hospitality (PRE) — safehouse rules enforced without collapse
  Optional: Command (PRE) for crisis control

Sídhe Magick (Optional): If taken, choose **Hearthward** (practical refuge protection) or **Hollow Ways** (threshold discipline).

Tools & Tokens: cord kits, hiding nails (non-iron), ash sachets, marking chalk/charcoal, seal toggles.

Anchors:

- Sanctuary tie: "If the hall fails, the People die."
- Vow: "I keep secrets even when praise would be easier."
- Taboo: "I will not keep a compromised token."
- Tell: doors seem to forget you after you pass.

Role in Play: sanctuary defense, infiltration investigations, internal stability, pressure management.
Failure Consequence Style: breaches, social distrust, sanctuary Clocks ticking upward.

HOSTBORN PROFESSION PACKS

Refuge Escort (Hostborn Runner) — *"No One Left on the Road"*

You move people. You get them through. You make the brutal calls without losing your humanity. You are the living line between "refuge" and "corpse in a ditch."

Attribute Priorities: AWR first, END second, GRC third.
Core Skills to Invest In:

- Notice (AWR) — ambush prevention
- Survival (END) — weather and fatigue management
- Command (PRE) — keep frightened groups moving
- Athletics (MGT) — dragging, lifting, forcing escapes (even with average Might)
- Stealth (GRC) — silence saves lives
- Tracking (AWR) — counter-tracking and reading pursuit

Optional: Boating (GRC) or Riding (GRC) depending on region

Sídhe Magick (Optional): If taken, choose **Hearthward** (protection of group) or **Hollow Ways** (route manipulation). Keep it spare—escort work is about discipline.

Tools & Tokens: emergency ration kit, cord for group tether, quiet whistle, non-iron spear/club, offering pouch.

Anchors:

- Sanctuary tie: "I escort for the sanctuary that took me in as a starving child."
- Vow: "I do not abandon the slow."
- Taboo: "I do not bring iron inside."
- Tell: hounds react to you too quickly.

Role in Play: chase scenes, ambush avoidance, moving sanctuary arcs, hard moral triage.
Failure Consequence Style: separation, injury, pursuit escalation—often expressed as Clock advancement.

Hostborn Strike-Warden — *"The Quiet Blade of the People"*

You are the one sent to end a threat before it becomes a raid: to break an iron-hunter cell, remove an informant, sabotage a bell project, or stop a Fomorian agent from spreading rot.

Attribute Priorities: GRC first, AWR second, MGT third.
Core Skills to Invest In:

- Stealth (GRC) — approach without notice
- Archery (GRC) or Thrown Weapons (GRC) — quiet ranged force
- Melee Weapons (MGT) — decisive close finish
- Tracking (AWR) — find targets and avoid counter-hunts
- Investigation (INT) — identify the real node of the threat
- Notice (AWR) — trap detection
  Optional: Tactics (INT) for planned hits

Sídhe Magick (Optional): If taken, choose **Glamour** (approach/escape) or **Well & Mirror** (truth and hidden rot). Keep it controlled; open magick is a tell.

Tools & Tokens: dark cord, small mirror shard, cutting tool, rope, "quiet offering" (bread/salt) for thresholds.

Anchors:

- Sanctuary tie: "My sanctuary has a wall because I kept threats away."
- Vow: "I strike only when it prevents greater harm."
- Taboo: "I will not kill under guest-right."
- Tell: your breath fogs strangely even in mild air.

Role in Play: infiltration, assassination-adjacent missions, sabotage, threat removal.
Failure Consequence Style: retaliation, pursuit, moral injury consequences.

WELLSPRING SÍDHE PROFESSION PACKS

Omen-Seer — *"The One Who Reads Water"*

You carry truth that others don't want. You read the emotional weather of places and people, connect patterns, and warn sanctuaries before rot becomes unstoppable.

Attribute Priorities: INT first, AWR second, PRE third.
Core Skills to Invest In:

- Investigation (INT) — connect clues and causes
- Notice (AWR) — catch early tampering
- Insight (AWR) — read people's fear and lies
- Lore: The Sídhe (INT) — witness sites and old patterns
- Hospitality (PRE) — keeping halls from rejecting hard truth
- Lore: Gaels & the Waking World (INT) — read human pressure systems
  Optional: Herbalism (INT) for rot signs in flora

Sídhe Magick (Recommended): Choose **Well & Mirror**. This is the archetypal School for this pack.

Tools & Tokens: bowl and reed bundle, mirror shard set, water stones, small offerings, charcoal for note marks.

Anchors:

- Sanctuary tie: "I keep a witness place that remembers too much."
- Vow: "I will name rot before it becomes normal."
- Taboo: "I will not drink from a spoiled well."
- Tell: reflections behave oddly around you.

Role in Play: investigation arcs, omen scenes, spirit negotiation, uncovering betrayal.
Failure Consequence Style: misread omens, social backlash, rot spreading faster.

Spirit-Intercessor — *"The One Who Bargains with the In-Between"*

You handle what others fear to speak to: guardians, oath-wraiths, haunted halls, and the in-between presences that make sanctuaries possible. You negotiate with things that do not share your morality.

Attribute Priorities: PRE first, AWR second, INT third.
Core Skills to Invest In:

- Etiquette (PRE) — you must not insult what you can't kill
- Hospitality (PRE) — you understand binding welcome and refusal
- Insight (AWR) — read mood and appetite of presences
- Lore: The Sídhe (INT) — names, taboos, offerings, witness rules
- Notice (AWR) — signs of intrusion and anger
- Persuasion (PRE) — your leverage is language
  Optional: Intimidation (PRE) for when courtesy fails

Sídhe Magick (Recommended): Choose **Well & Mirror** (most common) or **Oathcraft** (if you specialize in terms and sanctions).

Tools & Tokens: offering kit, small bell (non-iron), chalk/ash for marks, mirror shard, token cords.

Anchors:

- Sanctuary tie: "I keep a guardian fed so it does not feed on us."
- Vow: "I will not offer another's name without consent."
- Taboo: "I do not speak to the dead at noon."
- Tell: fog gathers when you speak binding courtesy phrases.

Role in Play: supernatural negotiation, cursed-site management, guardian bargains, keeping routes stable.
Failure Consequence Style: offended presences, sanctuary refusal, nightmare pressure.

HEARTHBOUND PROFESSION PACKS

Hearth-Healer — *"The Hands that Keep You Alive"*

You are medicine, morale, and domestic stability. You keep refugees functional, treat wounds, and prevent fear from becoming the real killer. You are the one who says "eat," "sleep," "breathe," and makes it happen.

Attribute Priorities: INT first, END second, PRE third.
Core Skills to Invest In:

- Healing (INT) — primary identity skill
- Herbalism (INT) — practical remedies and recognition of taint
- Hospitality (PRE) — managing guests and refuge stability
- Endure Pain (END) — you keep working under exhaustion
- Insight (AWR) — recognizing panic and coercion
- Crafting (INT) — tools, bandages, practical fixes
  Optional: Command (PRE) for enforcing calm routines

Sídhe Magick (Optional/Recommended): Choose **Hearthward** (protective domestic magick) if you want a mystical healer/warder angle.

Tools & Tokens: herb pouch, clean cloth, ash sachets, small bowl, cordwork for bindings, non-iron cutting tool.

Anchors:

- Sanctuary tie: "I keep the hall from becoming a grave."
- Vow: "No child dies from neglect while I draw breath."
- Taboo: "I will not refuse guest-right to the injured."
- Tell: your voice becomes too soothing; outsiders feel watched by kindness.

Role in Play: recovery scenes, resource pressure, refuge stability, moral stakes.
Failure Consequence Style: worsening injuries, morale collapse, internal conflict Clocks.

Refuge Major-Domo — *"The One Who Makes the Hall Work"*

You are logistics, rules, and quiet authority. You manage supplies, enforce sanctuary procedures, assign watches, and make hard calls so others can pretend they don't exist.

Attribute Priorities: PRE first, INT second, AWR third.
Core Skills to Invest In:

- Hospitality (PRE) — the heart of your authority
- Command (PRE) — enforce discipline
- Investigation (INT) — solve internal problems and sabotage
- Notice (AWR) — early warning inside the refuge
- Tokencraft (INT) — safehouse keys and belonging proof
- Persuasion (PRE) — keep alliances from fracturing
  Optional: Intimidation (PRE) for controlled pressure

Sídhe Magick (Optional): Choose **Hearthward** if you want you-and-the-hall-as-one protection style; otherwise skip Sídhe Magick and invest in social/logistics skills.

Tools & Tokens: ration ledger cord, token box, ash bowl, sealing toggles, spare travel kits.

Anchors:

- Sanctuary tie: "My refuge is the last stable hearth for miles."
- Vow: "The hall will not collapse into chaos."
- Taboo: "I will not hoard supplies for my favorites."
- Tell: people feel judged when they enter; even allies straighten up.

Role in Play: sanctuary governance, faction tension, resource dilemmas, internal threats.
Failure Consequence Style: refugee revolt, splits, infiltration success—expressed via Clocks.

BEASTMARKED PROFESSION PACKS

Wild Scout — *"Eyes of the Corridor"*

You move through land that roads don't own. You read animal behavior as warning, guide refugees off-path, and keep sanctuaries connected through wilderness corridors.

Attribute Priorities: AWR first, GRC second, END third.
Core Skills to Invest In:

- Tracking (AWR) — read threats and routes
- Notice (AWR) — danger recognition
- Survival (END) — wilderness competence
- Stealth (GRC) — silent approach and avoidance
- Navigation (INT) — even modest investment helps
- Archery (GRC) or Thrown Weapons (GRC) — practical range
  Optional: Boating (GRC) for coastal/bog regions

Sídhe Magick (Optional): Choose **Beastpact** if you want deeper shapechanging and animal communion; otherwise rely on innate minor form plus skills.

Tools & Tokens: bone whistle, totem cord, scent-mask herbs, non-iron knife, small offering pouch.

Anchors:

- Sanctuary tie: "I keep the wild corridor that feeds the refuge."
- Vow: "I will not bring pursuit to the hearth."

- Taboo: "I do not kill the land's messenger animals."
- Tell: birds gather near you before trouble.

Role in Play: scouting, wilderness travel, ambush prevention, tracking threats.
Failure Consequence Style: lost routes, exposure, pursuit tightening.

Totem-Bound Guardian — *"The Antler at the Door"*

You are boundary and warning. You guard thin places, enforce taboo spaces, and respond when something tries to cross into "inside" that should not. You are feared because you are the line.

Attribute Priorities: END first, MGT second, AWR third.
Core Skills to Invest In:

- Endure Pain (END) — you hold the line
- Melee Weapons (MGT) or Brawling (MGT) — close protection
- Notice (AWR) — detect approach and breach signs
- Survival (END) — long watches and harsh conditions
- Intimidation (PRE) — you are the warning
- Tactics (INT) — holding ground smartly
  Optional: Hospitality (PRE) if you also function as sanctuary enforcer

Sídhe Magick (Optional): Choose **Beastpact** (guardian forms, pact enforcement) or **Hearthward** (if you are a "door-warden" inside the refuge).

Tools & Tokens: boundary stones, totem charm, cord for marking claims, non-iron spear/club, simple armor/cover.

Anchors:

- Sanctuary tie: "A thin place under my watch has never been taken."
- Vow: "Nothing hungry crosses while I stand."
- Taboo: "I do not step under iron bells."
- Tell: your scent changes sharply with anger; animals react.

Role in Play: defense scenes, boundary threats, guardian confrontations, holding chokepoints.
Failure Consequence Style: breach events, sanctuary harm, lasting consequences.

Quick Notes on Sídhe Magick in These Packs

- **All Sídhe can access General Fae Magick in principle**, but effectiveness depends on investing in **Sídhe Magick (INT)**.
- Each Protagonist may commit to **only one School** total.
- If you skip Sídhe Magick at creation, you can still become a magick-user later through play, learning, and narrative effort—if the Director allows it.

Quick Pack-to-Campaign Matching

- **Diplomat / Sanctioner:** court intrigue, treaty wars, internal faction collapse
- **Veilrunner / Hallwright:** pursuit campaigns, sanctuary networks, infiltration mysteries
- **Escort / Strike-Warden:** road survival, raids, bell sabotage, threat removal
- **Omen-Seer / Intercessor:** rot mysteries, spirits, cursed places, omen-driven arcs
- **Healer / Major-Domo:** refuge drama, resource scarcity, morale and politics
- **Scout / Guardian:** wilderness corridors, boundary wars, thin place defense

CHAPTER 7: RESOLUTION

This chapter summarizes the One-on-One RPG resolution engine so you can run *The Fading* smoothly without constantly cross-referencing the core rulebook. When you want the full explanations, examples, and nuance, use the One-on-One core text as the authority.

Nothing in *The Fading* changes how resolution works. You still roll d100, compare to your **modified skill value**, apply **Advantage/Disadvantage**, and spend **Destiny** when it matters. This module adds setting overlays elsewhere (Skill Bases from Attributes, Essence, Lineage innates, iron vulnerability, attention pressure), but the engine remains the same.

When You Roll (and When You Don't)

You roll when:

- the outcome is uncertain **and** meaningful
- success or failure changes the direction, risk, time, safety, secrecy, or relationships
- the scene has stakes the table cares about

You typically don't roll when:

- there's no meaningful opposition and no meaningful cost
- the action is routine competence in a low-stakes moment
- you're only adding color to a scene

In duet play, fewer, higher-stakes rolls keep pacing sharp.

Choose Intent and Approach First

Before dice:

1. **Intent:** What do you want to achieve?
2. **Approach:** How are you doing it (tools, tokens, leverage, route choice, courtesy, threat)?
3. **Risk:** What could go wrong, and what does failure cost?

Then choose the most relevant skill.

The Fading often rewards careful approach:

- correct tokens and witness positioning can justify **Advantage**
- iron disruption, storms, panic, exhaustion often justify **Disadvantage**
- rushing and exposure may justify a **–10/–20** modifier

The Core Roll: d100 vs Modified Skill Value

When an action is uncertain:

- pick the relevant **skill**
- apply any situational modifiers (±10/±20)
- apply Advantage/Disadvantage as appropriate (per One-on-One core)
- roll **d100**

No Target Numbers

There are no fixed TNs. Your "target" is your **modified skill value**.

Interpreting Results

- **Win (Success):** You achieve your intent.

- **Loss (Failure):** You don't achieve your intent and/or you pay a cost, complication, or consequence.

The One-on-One style expects failure to *move the fiction*, not stall it.

Modifiers: ±10 and ±20 (Common Guidance)

Use modifiers to reflect circumstances:

- **+10**: favorable positioning, good tools, clear leverage, calm conditions
- **–10**: mild hardship—poor light, limited time, imperfect footing, partial information
- **+20**: major leverage—excellent preparation, strong witness support, decisive advantage
- **–20**: major hardship—panic, severe weather, serious injury, heavy iron presence, being watched closely

Apply them to the skill value before rolling.

> Keep it clean. If the fiction strongly supports Advantage/Disadvantage, you may not need to stack multiple small modifiers.

Advantage and Disadvantage (Synopsis)

Advantage/Disadvantage represent strong narrative positioning. Apply them exactly as the One-on-One core rules describe.

In *The Fading*, common sources include:

- **Advantage:** concealment, fog, correct tokens, witness-aligned procedure, strong leverage, well-prepared routes
- **Disadvantage:** iron disruption, exposure, fatigue, panic, public scrutiny, witness contradicting a lie

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Lesser Win (Brief Reference)

Sometimes the Protagonist does not fully get what they want, but the scene shouldn't stall. The One-on-One engine supports this through outcome framing.

A **Lesser Win** occurs when both the Protagonist and an antagonist fail in a contest, but the Protagonist suffers a lesser Degree of Failure (DoF):

- you achieve a **smaller version** of your intent, or
- you succeed at the main goal but accept a **meaningful cost**, or
- you gain **position/information** that keeps the story moving even if the main goal remains out of reach

Examples in Éire:

- You don't escape cleanly, but you reach a safehouse before pursuit closes.
- You don't convince the Gael lord to help, but you secure a delay and a quiet warning.
- You can't remove the iron breach yet, but you locate it and contain its immediate harm.
- You fail to hide completely, but you prevent them from learning your True Name.

Director use: Lesser Wins are excellent when a full failure would end the campaign prematurely or when the best story outcome is "you get something, but not everything."

Degrees of Outcome (Fiction-First)

Even with a single d100 roll, outcomes can be expressed by the Director as degrees:

- **Clean Win:** you get what you want with no new trouble
- **Win with Cost:** you succeed but pay in time, resources, pain, attention, or social fallout
- **Lesser Win:** partial success, constrained success, or success that keeps the story moving but leaves a problem standing

- **Loss with Progress:** you fail, but you learn something or gain position
- **Hard Loss:** you fail and the world pushes back decisively (injury, capture risk, breach escalation, attention surge)

This is not a separate mechanic—it's a way to keep duet pacing strong and consequences meaningful.

Resolution Reference:

Test: roll d100 ≤ skill/attribute.
Contest: both roll; success beats failure; compare DoS/DoF.
Mutual failure: least bad gets a Lesser Win.
Adv/Disadv: ±10/±20/±30.
Destiny: +10 to you and/or −10 to them per point; stacks.

Degree of Success/Failure (DoS/DoF) Reference:

Modified Skill Value (MSV) = base skill after all situational modifiers (including Advantage/Disadvantage handling and any ± adjustments).

Degree of Success (DoS) = MSV − Roll (if the result is 0 or higher).

Degree of Failure (DoF) = Roll − MSV (if the result is higher than MSV).

Consequences (Synopsis)

When failure matters—or when success comes with a price—the Director applies consequences using the One-on-One core framework.

In *The Fading*, consequences commonly look like:

- **Injury/Condition:** wounded, exhausted, iron-singed, shaken
- **Social Fallout:** insult, sanction risk, hospitality breach, loss of trust
- **Resource Loss:** supplies ruined, token compromised, route exposed
- **Time Pressure:** night falls, storm worsens, pursuit closes
- **Tells & Attention:** rumors, hounds, patrol interest, a net tightening
- **Sanctuary Harm:** breach, morale fracture, guardian agitation

Setting reminder: iron injuries can escalate consequences. Tells often advance Attention Clocks.

Opposed and Contested Actions (Synopsis)

When an enemy actively contests you (a chase, a search, a negotiation standoff), resolve it using the contested action approach from the One-on-One core rules.

Common contested scenes in Éire:

- stealth vs patrol search
- escape vs hounds and trackers
- persuasion vs refusal/authority
- deception vs suspicion and witness pressure

Keep it lean: one or a few meaningful rolls with clear stakes beats long dice chains.

Lineage Innates in Resolution

Lineage innate abilities:

- require a **Main action** to attempt meaningfully
- cost **no Essence**
- use the same d100 engine if uncertain or opposed
- often justify Advantage / prevent Disadvantage through fictional positioning

Innates typically change what is *possible* (or how risky it is), not the fundamental math of the roll.

Contested Rolls (Opposed Tests) — Quick Reference:

When two sides directly oppose each other (chase vs chase, stealth vs watch, will vs coercion), both roll d100 against their modified skill value (or the Director-approved Attribute benchmark if no skill applies). Resolve each roll as a Win or Loss normally, then compare:

If only one side Wins: that side wins the contest.

If both Win: the side with the higher Degree of Success (DoS) wins (cleaner control).

If both Lose: the side with the lower Degree of Failure (DoF) wins (fails "less badly").

If it's effectively tied: treat as a Lesser Win for the side with fictional positioning, or advance the scene with a cost/complication (often a Clock tick, lost ground, exposure, or strain).

Directors should keep contests moving: a contested roll answers who gets their way right now, not every tiny exchange—use one strong contest, then narrate the outcome forward.

Sídhe Magick in Resolution (Preview)

Sídhe Magick attempts use the same d100 engine, with one constant:

- attempting a working spends **Essence** (success or failure)

Full procedure, costs, recovery, and Schools are detailed later in Book 1's Magick chapters.

The Duet Loop That Keeps Play Sharp

This isn't a new rule—just the rhythm that makes One-on-One sing in *The Fading*:

1. State intent and approach
2. Director states stakes and likely costs
3. Apply positioning (modifiers, Advantage/Disadvantage)
4. Roll d100
5. Resolve with a Win / Lesser Win / Loss that moves the scene
6. Apply consequences, complications, or clock pressure as needed
7. Continue immediately from the new situation

W. H. Bartlett.
J. Cousen.

CHAPTER 8: DESTINY

Destiny is the One-on-One RPG's story-forward resource. It represents the moment when fate leans your way, when the Protagonist refuses to be reduced to a footnote, and when the narrative gives you the room to make a choice that matters.

In *The Fading*, Destiny has an even sharper meaning: it is your refusal to be forgotten. The island is tightening. The waking world is building iron into thresholds. Courts fracture. Sanctuaries fail. Destiny is what you spend when you say:

"Not like this."
"Not yet."
"Not to them."

This chapter summarizes how Destiny is used in One-on-One, and then provides setting-specific guidance that helps it feel right for the Sídhe without changing the underlying mechanics.

What Destiny Is (and Is Not)

Destiny is...

- a limited resource you can spend to **tilt outcomes** at crucial moments
- a player-facing tool that protects agency and creates cinematic turns
- a statement of what the Protagonist truly cares about

Destiny is not...

- a replacement for planning or skill investment
- a constant "always-on" bonus
- an excuse to ignore consequences indefinitely

Destiny is best when it changes a scene in a way everyone will remember.

Starting Destiny

Your starting Destiny is set by the One-on-One RPG core rules. *The Fading* does not change it.

Record Destiny at character creation (Book I Chapter 1). Destiny should be visible on your sheet, because in duet play it is a major pacing dial.

When You Can Spend Destiny

Spend Destiny when the outcome is meaningful and you want to:

- avert a hard loss
- turn a loss into a **Lesser Win**
- secure a clean success when a cost would be devastating
- protect someone or something central to your Protagonist's anchors

In other words: spend Destiny when the story is at stake, not when your pride is at stake.

What Spending Destiny Does (Synopsis)

Use Destiny exactly as the One-on-One core rules describe. This chapter does not rewrite the mechanical options; it summarizes the kinds of effects Destiny commonly provides so you can reference them quickly.

Destiny typically lets you do one or more of the following:

- **Improve an outcome** (e.g., convert a failure into a Lesser Win or a success)
- **Reduce a cost or consequence** (you still pay something, but not the thing that ends the campaign)
- **Secure a crucial detail** (you have the right tool, token, memory, or timing in a believable way)
- **Hold the line** (resist coercion, panic, iron disruption, or social collapse long enough to act)
- **Declare a narrative pivot** (the moment shifts because fate favors you—once)

Keep Destiny effects grounded in the fiction. Destiny is powerful because it supports *the story you are already in*, not because it creates unrelated miracles.

Destiny and "Lesser Win"

Destiny is one of the cleanest tools for turning a would-be hard failure into a **Lesser Win**.

In *The Fading*, a Lesser Win often looks like:

- you escape, but your route is compromised
- you protect the sanctuary, but you become the target
- you win the bargain, but owe an offering or future service
- you stop the rot's immediate spread, but it leaves a mark behind
- you prevent the hunters from learning your True Name, but they learn your Travel Name

Destiny helps you choose *which* cost you can bear.

Eírish Destiny: What It Feels Like

Destiny in *The Fading* is not "heroic luck" in a high-fantasy sense. It's more like:

- the right person remembers you at the right time
- the old courtesy phrase lands cleanly under witness
- the fog thickens when you need it, but not like a spell—like the island agreeing
- a token holds meaning longer than it should
- your body refuses to freeze when iron should make you falter
- the sanctuary's hearth remembers you as "inside" even when politics say otherwise

Destiny is the island's last kindness—paid for in future trouble.

Éire-Specific Destiny Triggers (Guidance)

These are not required rules—just cues for when spending Destiny tends to feel most satisfying and "on theme."

A) Identity Under Pressure

Spend Destiny when you refuse erasure:

- resisting True Name leverage
- enduring humiliation without breaking
- holding your shape near iron long enough to act
- refusing to become a story told wrongly by humans

B) Hospitality and Witness

Spend Destiny when the customs that keep your people alive are on the line:

- saving guest-right from becoming bloodshed
- preventing a sanctuary breach from turning into a hall collapse
- binding a bargain cleanly under witness
- protecting an innocent guest even when it costs you

C) Sanctuary Survival

Spend Destiny when a sanctuary's stability is threatened:

- preventing panic from becoming riot
- getting refugees inside before the net closes

- stopping an iron object from being hidden near the hearth
- preserving a crucial token network

D) The Net Tightens

Spend Destiny when attention would become campaign-ending:

- the hounds are about to catch your scent line
- a guard is about to recognize your tell
- an abbot is about to record your name
- an iron-hunter captain is about to acquire a token linked to you

Destiny is especially potent when it prevents the wrong kind of ending: "we're caught because of one unlucky roll."

Destiny and Consequences in The Fading

The One-on-One engine thrives on consequences. Destiny doesn't remove consequence play; it shapes it.

Suggested Destiny Uses with Consequences

- **Shift the consequence** to something survivable
    - instead of "captured," you're "escaped but route-compromised"
- **Downgrade severity**
    - instead of "crippling wound," you're "iron-singed but mobile"
- **Redirect harm**
    - you take the cost so another person doesn't
- **Contain fallout**
    - the sanctuary is bruised, not broken; the breach is localized, not systemic

Destiny should feel like choice: *you pay, but you choose what you pay with.*

Destiny and Clocks (Éire Notes)

Book 1 Chapter 27 will cover Clocks in full module context. For now, here's the key relationship:

- Destiny can justify **preventing a Clock tick** that would feel unfairly sudden.
- Destiny can also justify **buying time** (delaying a tick, creating a detour, forcing the pursuers to waste effort).
- Destiny should not permanently delete pressure; it should reshape it.

In *The Fading*, the most common Clock Destiny interacts with is **Attention**):

- you escape, but attention still rises later
- you prevent the worst escalation now, but the net keeps tightening

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Destiny and Lineage Flavor (Quick Cues)

These are not mechanics—just tone guides so Destiny feels different by Lineage:

- **Court-Sídhe:** the phrase lands; the hall quiets; witness supports your claim
- **Moundborn:** the door is unlatched; the crowd looks away; your trail breaks
- **Hostborn:** the group moves as one; you find a gap; fear doesn't freeze you
- **Wellspring Sídhe:** the omen clarifies; the reflection reveals; the spirit answers once
- **Hearthbound:** the child sleeps; the wound stops bleeding; panic settles
- **Beastmarked:** the land warns; the animal form slips through; the storm covers your tracks

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Regaining Destiny (Synopsis + Setting Feel)

Regaining Destiny follows the One-on-One core rules. This module does not alter the refresh structure.

In *The Fading*, it *feels* right when Destiny returns after:

- you uphold hospitality at genuine cost
- you protect a sanctuary or route network through sacrifice
- you keep your vow even when it harms you
- you refuse to betray someone under witness
- you survive a major pressure arc without becoming cruel

If the core rules allow a refresh at certain beats, these are excellent narrative beats to attach to that refresh.

Practical Table Advice (Duet Focus)

1. **Spend Destiny earlier than you think** when the alternative is a dead campaign branch.
2. **Spend Destiny to protect themes**, not just to "win."
3. **Let Destiny create new problems** that are interesting (route compromised, favor owed, attention delayed not erased).
4. **Make Destiny visible**—when it's spent, everyone should feel the pivot.

CHAPTER 9: COMPANIONS

In One-on-One play, Companions do three things better than anything else:

1. they make the world feel inhabited, not staged
2. they create emotional leverage and consequences that matter
3. they give the Protagonist someone to act *with*—and sometimes someone to lose

In *The Fading*, Companions are also cultural survival. Sanctuaries do not endure through lone heroes; they endure through networks of people, oaths, favors, and burdens shared. Even a "solo" Protagonist is never truly alone—unless the campaign is about the terror of that isolation.

This chapter summarizes the core Companion rules from One-on-One for quick use, then gives setting guidance so your Companions feel like Éire: Sídhe kin, Gael allies, Fir Bolg contacts, uneasy Fomorian-linked witnesses, spirit-touched animals, and rival court attendants.

What a Companion Is

A Companion is a named supporting character who:

- travels with the Protagonist or regularly acts alongside them
- has clear personality and preferences
- provides tangible support in scenes
- can be put at risk (and can create consequences)

Companions are not "extra PCs." They do not steal spotlight. They exist to deepen the Protagonist's story and expand what scenes can do.

The Companion Rules (Synopsis)

Use the One-on-One core Companion framework as written. This section is a reminder of the typical moving parts.

Companion Role

Each Companion should have a clear "job" in the narrative, such as:

- scout, messenger, healer's assistant, bodyguard, interpreter
- political ally, witness keeper, safehouse contact
- burden (someone you must protect), rival (someone tied to you by necessity)

Companion Competence

Companions are competent in a narrow band:

- they are reliable in their role
- they are not perfect at everything
- they often solve small problems so the Protagonist can focus on big ones

In practice, the Director can treat a Companion's competence as:

- **automatic help** in low-stakes moments, or
- **justification for Advantage** when their role meaningfully supports the Protagonist

Companion Risk

A Companion is part of the stakes. Threats that matter in *The Fading* often target:

- Companions directly (capture, injury, coercion)
- their reputation (shame, rumors, accusation)
- their loyalties (forced betrayal, divided ties)
- their safety in sanctuaries (breach consequences)

Companions create pressure without needing constant combat.

Companion Spotlight Discipline

In duet play:

- the Protagonist decides
- the Companion supports
- the Director uses Companions to introduce choices, costs, and emotional weight

Companions should not repeatedly "solve the plot." They should make the plot harder, richer, and more personal.

What Companions Do Mechanically at the Table

Companions most often matter through the existing One-on-One tools:

Advantage / Disadvantage Positioning

A Companion can justify **Advantage** when:

- their role directly supports the action (scout helps stealth, healer helps recovery, diplomat helps negotiations)
- they provide tools, access, or credible backing
- they reduce risk by handling a second task simultaneously

A Companion can also be the reason for **Disadvantage** when:

- they're injured, panicking, noisy, or compromised
- they draw attention (a tell, a public reputation, a recognizable face)
- they disagree and create friction at a crucial moment

Consequences

A Companion is a frequent target for consequences:

- "You succeed, but your companion takes the injury."
- "You fail; they're separated in the fog."
- "You get inside, but your companion is accused and quarantined."
- "You win the bargain, but your companion is owed as collateral."

These are not "punishments." They are story fuel.

Clocks (Setting Overlay)

Companions are excellent Clock drivers:

- the **Attention Clock** ticks because someone saw your companion's tell
- a **Sanctuary Stability Clock** ticks because your companion's feud erupts
- a **Breach Clock** ticks because your companion made a desperate mistake

This meshes with Book 1 Chapter 27's Clock procedures; here, the point is: Companions create pressure in a clean, trackable way.

Destiny

Destiny is often spent for Companions because it signals what matters:

- protecting them from capture
- turning a hard loss into a Lesser Win that keeps them alive
- preventing a betrayal under witness
- buying time to get them inside

In *The Fading*, Destiny spent for a Companion is Destiny spent against erasure.

Companion Tiers

These are not new mechanics—just useful categories for running Companions consistently:

Traveling Companion (Primary)

This is the person regularly with you. They appear often, have the most emotional weight, and are most often in danger.

Sanctuary Companion (Anchor)

A person tied to a refuge: a major-domo, a hearth-keeper, a gate-warden, a child you protect, an elder with dangerous memory. They may not travel, but their fate drives the campaign.

Network Companion (Contact)

A person you meet periodically: a ferryman, a Gael midwife ally, a Fir Bolg cairn-keeper, a court runner. They are used to open doors and complicate plans.

Rival Companion (Attached Threat)

Someone who is "with" you due to politics: an assigned attendant from a rival court, a hostage-exchange partner, a coerced guide. They help and hinder.

A single campaign can include several, but avoid clutter: one or two strong Companions are better than five thin ones.

Éire Companion Guidance: Who Travels With a Sídhe?

Use these as inspiration for Companion types that match the setting's pressures.

Sídhe Kin and Court-Attendants

- a young runner proving themselves
- an oath-keeper who records terms and warns you when you drift
- a bitter cousin from a rival hall assigned as "support"
- a hearth-tender who keeps you fed and keeps your shame from eating you

Common pressure: politics follows them. Rival courts will use them to reach you.

Gael Allies (Dangerous, Valuable)

- a sympathetic midwife, monk, or outlaw with a reason to hate iron-hunters
- a minor lord's second child who doesn't fit at home
- a translator who knows both worlds and is hunted by both

Common pressure: their safety is fragile; being seen with you can ruin them.

Fir Bolg Contacts (Hard Truth, Hard Aid)

- a cairn-keeper who controls a wild pass
- a stone-right worker who respects you but doesn't like you
- a clan youth sent as a "test" of your intentions

Common pressure: their code is strict; disrespect creates immediate consequences.

Fomorian-Linked Survivors (Uneasy, Useful)

- a rot-scarred person who hears the sea at night
- a defector who knows brine-craft signs
- a captive who claims to be a victim... and might be

Common pressure: paranoia and nightmare pressure; sanctuaries may refuse them.

Animal and Spirit-Touched Companions

This setting supports companions that are not human-shaped, but keep them grounded:

- a hawk that returns with strange tokens
- a hound that will not cross iron
- a "guardian-cat" that watches thresholds
- a small spirit-bound object (a bowl, a cord, a stone) that "warns" rather than fights

Common pressure: they are tells. They draw attention if used openly.

Companion Bonds in The Fading

In the One-on-One engine, bonds are story glue. In *The Fading*, bonds are also survival commitments.

When defining a Companion bond, choose:

- **Why do they stay with you?** (debt, love, fear, duty, exile, oath)
- **What do they want?** (home, vengeance, forgiveness, recognition, safety)
- **What breaks the bond?** (hospitality breach, betrayal, abandonment, shame)
- **What puts them at risk?** (iron-hunters, rival courts, rot, Gael law)

A good bond gives the Director clear levers for meaningful scenes without forcing melodrama.

How to Handle Companion Actions Without Stealing Spotlight

A simple table practice that keeps duet pacing clean:

- **If the Companion helps the Protagonist:** treat it as Advantage, positioning, or automatic support in low-stakes moments.
- **If the Companion acts alone:** resolve quickly, off-screen when possible, and focus on the consequence it creates for the Protagonist.
- **If the Companion is endangered:** make it a choice, a consequence, or a clock—something the Protagonist must respond to.

Companions should create decisions, not replace them.

The Companion as Pressure Engine (Éire Style)

Use Companions to make the setting's signature pressures personal:

Hospitality Pressure

- Your Companion violates guest-right out of fear.
- Your Companion is accused of being "wrong" for the hall.
- A sanctuary offers guest-right but demands your Companion stay behind.

Witness Pressure

- Your Companion swears something under witness and can't take it back.
- Your Companion's lie in a witnessed place stains your reputation.
- A spirit recognizes your Companion and demands payment.

Iron Pressure

- Your Companion is injured by iron and you must treat the escalation consequences.
- Your Companion carries an iron object unknowingly into sanctuary space.
- Your Companion is bait: hunters target them because they're easier than you.

Attention Pressure

- Your Companion is recognizable; your travel becomes harder.
- Your Companion's family is connected to the local lord or abbot.
- Your Companion panics in public, creating a tell.

These are clean ways to advance Clocks without random cruelty.

Using the Appendix: Pregenerated Companions

To make play fast, *The Fading* includes a set of pregenerated Companions in Chapter 30 of Book 1. Each one is designed to be dropped into play immediately with:

- a role and competence band
- a bond hook

- a built-in pressure lever (what gets them in trouble)
- a personal desire that can complicate your choices

Directors: pick one that supports your opening situation,
then let the Protagonist decide whether they trust them.

CHAPTER 10: ESSENCE (POWER, DEPLETION, RECOVERY)

The Sídhe do not "prepare spells." They do not memorize formulae and throw fire. Their workings are older than that: **attention shaped into form**, **customs made functional**, **tokens that carry witness**, **thresholds persuaded to open**, and **names handled like loaded blades**.

All of that requires fuel.

In *The Fading*, that fuel is **Essence**—a finite pool representing your personal reserve of Sídhe potency: the strength of your presence in the world, the steadiness of your selfhood, and the part of you that can make the island agree *for a moment*.

Essence is not mana in the modern sense. It is not a "battery." It is closer to:

- breath held too long,
- a vow kept under strain,
- a true name guarded with teeth,
- the warmth of "inside" carried out into the cold.

This chapter defines how Essence is calculated, how it is spent, how it returns, and what happens when you run dry.

What Essence Does (In One Sentence)

Essence limits how often you can attempt Sídhe Magick before you must retreat, recover, bargain, or accept the cost of pushing past your nature.

Essence interacts with:

- **Sídhe Magick (INT)** skill rolls
- Magick Schools and working lists (following Magick chapters)
- Iron pressure
- Artifacts and implements
- Consequences, Clocks, and Destiny

Essence does *not* affect:

- Lineage innate abilities (no Essence cost; Main action only)
- non-magick skills (Essence doesn't power Athletics, Persuasion, etc.)
- Destiny (separate resource)

Essence Maximum (How Much You Have)

In *The Fading*, your Essence is tied to **Presence (PRE)**—because Presence in this setting is more than charisma. It is composure, authority, identity held under pressure, and the ability to remain *yourself* while the world tries to define you as "other."

ESSENCE MAXIMUM

Essence Max = ⌈PRE ÷ 2⌉ (round up)

This produces a stable range that keeps magick potent but never unlimited.

Record Essence on your character sheet as:
Essence: [current] / [max]

> **Director note (consistency):** Use this formula for all Sídhe Protagonists in the module. If a creature or NPC uses Essence, you may assign a simple Essence Max (typically 3–8) rather than fully statting PRE.

When You Spend Essence

You spend Essence when you **attempt** Sídhe Magick—whether the roll succeeds or fails.

This is deliberate: the cost is in the *attempt*, the reaching, the forcing of your nature into the waking world.

ESSENCE SPEND TRIGGERS

You spend Essence when you:

- perform **General Fae Magick** (small workings, subtle shifts, token-acts)
- perform a **School working** (your chosen School's techniques)
- counter, unweave, or resist an active working through magick
- maintain a working that explicitly requires sustained fuel (rare; defined by that working)

You do **not** spend Essence when you:

- use a **Lineage innate**
- use mundane skills (even if the scene is supernatural)
- benefit from a passive charm that doesn't require a deliberate working

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Essence Cost by Working Power

Every magick working has a **Power** rating. Power represents the *weight* of the attempt: how far you are asking the world to bend.

Power is not "damage dice." It is the working's scale.

POWER STEPS

Use these five steps as the module's common language:

- **Power 1 — Whisper:** subtle, brief, personal-scale, easily hidden
- **Power 2 — Thread:** clear effect, small group/area, still deniable
- **Power 3 — Oath:** significant change, strong binding, unmistakable consequence
- **Power 4 — Gate:** threshold-level alteration, major travel/shape shifts, big attention risk
- **Power 5 — Myth:** rare, landmark-scale acts; always story-defining

ESSENCE COST

Essence Cost = Working Power (1 to 5)

So:

- Power 1 costs **1 Essence**
- Power 2 costs **2 Essence**
- Power 3 costs **3 Essence**
- Power 4 costs **4 Essence**
- Power 5 costs **5 Essence**

Practical result: You can do small magick often, strong magick a few times, and myth-level magick only when you're willing to reshape the campaign.

The Sídhe Magick Attempt Procedure

Whenever you attempt Sídhe Magick (General or School):

1. **State your intent** (what you want to happen).
2. **Name your method** (token, courtesy phrase, offering, witness site, implement).
3. **Choose the working** (or the closest fit) and note its **Power**.
4. **Pay Essence** equal to Power *(immediately, before the roll).*
5. Determine your **modified skill value** for **Sídhe Magick (INT)**:
    - apply situational modifiers (±10/±20)

- apply Advantage/Disadvantage as appropriate
- apply tool/implement positioning (see below)

6. Roll **d100** vs your modified skill value.
7. Resolve outcome as **Win** / **Lesser Win** / **Loss**, with consequences, tells, and/or Clock pressure as appropriate.

This is the same One-on-One resolution engine, with one added step: **Essence payment**.

Implements, Tokens, and Offerings (Positioning)

Sídhe Magick is not cast bare-handed. It is performed through *meaning*.

COMMON POSITIONING GUIDANCE

- Proper implement, proper token, proper courtesy: **+10**
- Strong witness support (well/stone/threshold aligned): **+10** (or +20 if it's perfect and uncontested)
- Improvised tool, incorrect form, rushed words: **−10**
- Working in chaos, panic, battle motion: **−10 to −20**
- Heavy iron presence or direct iron contact: often **Disadvantage** and/or **−20** (see Section 9)

These modifiers adjust your **modified skill value**. They do not change Essence cost unless a working explicitly says so.

What Happens at Low Essence

Essence creates natural pacing. Low Essence is a signal: retreat, regroup, negotiate, or accept escalating risk.

ESSENCE STATES

Use these states as table shorthand:

- **Steady (Essence ≥ half max):** no special effect
- **Thin (Essence below half max):** you feel the strain; the Director should describe subtle tells (shadows wrong, voice thinning, cold in the bones)
- **Spent (Essence = 0):** you are out of fuel

WHEN YOU ARE SPENT (Essence 0)

You can still act normally with non-magick skills and Lineage innates, but:

- attempting Sídhe Magick while Spent is **dangerous** (see Overreach below)
- the Director is encouraged to treat you as fragile to iron disruption, panic pressure, and identity strain (often Disadvantage in scenes where your selfhood is being pressed)

Being Spent should feel like a real condition: not helpless, but exposed.

Overreach (Casting Without Essence)

Sometimes you must do magick anyway. A sanctuary is burning. A child is being dragged across an iron threshold. A true name is being spoken.

You may attempt Sídhe Magick when you do not have enough Essence—but it carries a price.

OVERREACH RULE

If you attempt a working and cannot pay its full Essence cost, you may still proceed **only if** you accept:

1. **Essence drops to 0** (if it isn't already), and
2. you take an immediate narrative **Consequence** appropriate to the strain **and/or** the Director advances a relevant **Clock**.

This is not a separate system. It's the standard consequence framework applied deliberately.

Recommended Overreach Consequences (examples)

- **Hollowed** (you feel "less real" until you recover)
- **Name-Thin** (true-name pressure becomes easier to apply against you)

- **Iron-Sick** (iron presence becomes harder to bear; Disadvantage more likely)
- **Witness-Shaken** (witness sites feel cold to you; hospitality scenes become brittle)
- **Dream-Noise** (night rest is disturbed; nightmares, whispers, rot-tugs)

Recommended Clock Advances (examples)

- **Attention Clock +1** (your working leaves a tell)
- **Fading Clock +1** (if you are using the optional personal Fading clock)
- **Sanctuary Stability Clock +1** (if the overreach happened "inside" and strained the hall)

Overreach is how you do the impossible once—then pay for it for chapters.

Essence and Iron (How the World Refuses You)

Iron is not merely painful; it makes your workings harder to hold. The Director should decide how potent and harmful iron is in the campaign, but should try to be consistent so that the Protagonist knows their place with it.

IRON DISRUPTION TO ESSENCE WORK

When heavy iron presence meaningfully interferes (iron-hunter traps, forge spaces, chains, bell hardware, iron-lined thresholds), the Director may apply one or more:

- **Disadvantage** on Sídhe Magick attempts
- **–20** to modified skill value when the iron is immediate and concentrated
- a requirement for additional positioning (you need a better implement, a witness site, an offering) just to make the attempt plausible

IRON AND ESSENCE LOSS (Optional, Use Sparingly)

If you are **injured** by iron, the Director may also rule that the wound "leaks" you:

- **Iron Wound Leak:** after an iron-inflicted injury consequence is applied, you may immediately lose **1 additional Essence** (to a minimum of 0).

Use this only when you want iron to feel like a true bane in a key scene—not as a constant tax.

Essence Recovery (How You Refill the Well)

Essence returns when you reestablish yourself as real: through rest, sanctuary warmth, witness, offerings, and the customs that keep your people intact.

The following recovery rules are designed to be simple, consistent, and duet-friendly.

A) Breath Recovery (Short Pause)

If you get a meaningful lull—quiet, shelter, no immediate pursuit—and you can breathe, drink, and steady yourself:

- **Recover 1 Essence** (once per scene at most)

This is the "we have a moment" refill.

B) Rest Recovery (Sleep)

If you complete a full rest (sleep or deep trance) in a relatively safe situation:

- **Recover Essence equal to** $\lceil \mathbf{PRE} \div \mathbf{40} \rceil$ (minimum 1)

So most Protagonists recover **1–3** Essence from ordinary sleep, depending on Presence.

C) Sanctuary Recovery (Inside Warmth)

If you rest **inside a true sanctuary** that recognizes you as "inside" (guest-right honored, hearth stable, no active breach):

- **Recover to full Essence** by the end of that rest

Sanctuary is your natural recharge. It is also why sanctuaries matter so much.

> **If the sanctuary is breached** (iron hidden near the hearth, hospitality broken, guardian anger), the Director may reduce this to ordinary rest recovery until the breach is addressed.

D) Witness & Offering Recovery (Active Recovery)

In addition to rest, you may perform a deliberate recovery act:

- a proper offering at a recognized witness site
- a hospitality act done correctly (feeding the hungry under guest-right)
- an oath reaffirmed under witness that costs you something real
- a cleansing/quiet rite performed by your culture

If the Director agrees the act is meaningful and properly framed, you recover:

- **1 Essence** (typical), or
- **2 Essence** if the act is costly, witnessed, and changes the situation

This is a tool for proactive players: you can *earn* your recovery by playing the setting.

Essence and Artifacts

Artifacts are real in *The Fading*. Some do not "cast spells." They alter what your working can do—or how heavy it lands.

POWER BONUS ARTIFACTS

Some artifacts grant +**Power** to your workings (example: a torc that adds +1 Power).

Artifact Power Rule

When you attempt a working, you may apply the artifact's Power bonus to the working's **effective Power** for purposes of scale (duration, reach, weight of effect) **without increasing Essence cost**, unless the artifact explicitly says otherwise.

- A **Power 2** working becomes **effective Power 3** with a +1 Power torc, still costing **2 Essence**.
- A **Power 1** whisper can become startlingly sharp without becoming "expensive."

This matches the setting's feel: artifacts don't just make you better, they make your presence harder to deny.

Stacking: By default, only the single most relevant Power bonus applies to a given working unless the Director explicitly permits stacking.

IMPLEMENT ARTIFACTS (Focus Tools)

Other artifacts do not add Power; they make casting cleaner:

- granting +**10** when used properly
- preventing Disadvantage in specific circumstances
- protecting you from tells (rare)

These fit the "tool-and-token" nature of Sídhe Magick.

Harmful Workings and Weapon-Logic

Later magick chapters will present specific harmful workings. When a working causes harm in play:

- it has a listed **Power** and **Essence cost**
- it is resolved with **Sídhe Magick (INT)** like any other working
- it deals damage **as a normal weapon profile** (range, type, and harm defined by that working)

This preserves the One-on-One combat feel: even supernatural harm is still harm, not a different minigame.

Director Guidance: Essence as Pacing, Not Punishment

Essence exists to create the campaign's rhythm:

- **High Essence** = you can risk weird solutions, big bargains, bold rescues
- **Low Essence** = you must rely on skills, allies, innates, stealth, politics, and survival
- **Spent** = you become mortal in the sharpest sense; you must choose carefully
- **Overreach** = the legendary moment that becomes a scar

If Essence feels punitive, the table is likely treating every problem as "solve with magick." Encourage the setting's intended loop:

- use skills and tokens
- save magick for pivotal moments
- recover through sanctuaries and customs
- let consequences and attention pressure shape the story

CHAPTER 11: GENERAL FAE MAGICK

General Fae Magick is the shared craft of the People—the small, daily, **culturally common** workings used across *all* Lineages. It is not "wizardry." It is *how the Sídhe make life possible while fading*: keeping a hearth from dying, making a token carry meaning, persuading a threshold to behave, reading the island's mood, softening attention, and ensuring hospitality remains real instead of merely spoken.

If Lineage innates are what you *are*, General Fae Magick is what you *do*—the common language of subtle power.

This chapter gives you:

- how General Fae Magick functions in play (mechanically and fictionally)
- guidance for Directors on adjudicating improvised minor workings

Core Rule: How You Cast

General Fae Magick uses:

- **Skill:** Sídhe Magick (Intellect)
- **Action:** Main action (unless a working explicitly says otherwise)
- **Cost:** Spend **Essence equal to Power** (success or failure)
- **Roll:** d100 vs your **modified Sídhe Magick skill value**
- **Outcome:** Win / Lesser Win / Loss, with consequences/tells/Clock pressure when appropriate

No Target Numbers. The "target" is always the **modified skill value**.

What Makes It "General"

A working belongs here if it is:

- culturally widespread among the Sídhe (learned in sanctuaries, courts, routes)
- minor in scale (usually Power 1–2; rarely Power 3)
- useful in daily life: travel, secrecy, hospitality, witness, token-craft, small protections
- not dependent on your one chosen School's deep techniques

General Fae Magick is the glue that keeps Éire playable without turning every scene into high sorcery.

Tools, Forms, and Courtesy

General workings almost always use *form*:

- **Token:** cord, ring, reed, bowl, stone, ash pinch, thread, bread, milk, salt
- **Courtesy phrase:** short, culturally known lines spoken correctly
- **Offering:** tiny but sincere (a bite, a sip, a warm breath into a bowl)
- **Witness:** thresholds, wells, stones, hearths, doorframes, fords

Positioning guidance (typical):

- Proper token + correct form: **+10**
- Proper witness site for the working (hearth for hearth-work, ford for water-work): **+10** (or +20 if perfect)
- Improvised form or rushed words: **–10**

- Panic/chaos/battle motion: **–10 to –20**
- Heavy iron presence: often **Disadvantage** and/or **–20**

Improvising Minor Workings

If a player wants a small effect not on the list:

1. Decide the **intent** in one sentence.
2. Assign **Power** based on scope:
    - Power 1 (Whisper): personal, brief, subtle
    - Power 2 (Thread): clear effect, small area/group, still deniable
    - Power 3 (Oath): noticeable, consequential, socially binding or threshold-shaping
3. Require an appropriate **form** (token/phrase/offering).
4. Resolve with **Sídhe Magick** as normal.

On a Lesser Win: give the intended effect but shorten duration, narrow scope, or add a tell.
On a Loss: the effect fizzles *and* you introduce cost—attention tick, wrong witness reaction, token compromise, or a spiritual "coldness" consequence.

Combat and Harmful Workings (How They Fit)

General Fae Magick is not built for flashy battle. When it harms, it harms like Éire harms: through **binding**, **disorientation**, **breath stolen**, **skin-prickle pain**, **thorn and bramble**, **falls**, and **fear made physical**.

When a working deals damage, treat it as a **normal weapon-like harm**:

- **Damage:** listed as "Light / Standard / Heavy" (matching your table's weapon profiles)
- **Range:** Touch / Near / Short / Far / Sight
- **Tags:** Non-iron, mystical, quiet or loud (for attention)

Important: This chapter never introduces a separate combat subsystem. It stays inside One-on-One's normal combat handling.

The General Fae Workings

All workings below share:

- **Action:** Main
- **Roll:** Sídhe Magick (INT)
- **Cost:** Essence = Power
  Unless otherwise noted.

Each entry includes: **Range/Area**, **Duration**, **Power**, description, and suggested modifiers.

Hearth-Breath Ember

Range/Area: Touch (a hearth, candle, coal, or firepit)
Duration: Immediate; fire becomes stable for an hour of normal use
Power: 1
Description: You breathe softly into cupped hands over ash or wick; the heat answers like an old friend. A dull ember awakens, smoke settles into a clean spiral, and the fire burns steady rather than hungry.
Modifiers: +10 with proper hearth tools/ash bowl; –20 in rain or strong wind; Disadvantage if iron is embedded in the hearth hardware.

Ash-Quiet (Hush of the Hall)

Range/Area: Near (a room or small clearing)
Duration: 10–30 minutes (Director's call)
Power: 1
Description: You pinch ash and "close" it in your fist; sound in the area dulls as if wrapped in wool. Footsteps soften, whispers don't carry, and small noises vanish into the background—perfect for sanctuary discipline or a tense escape.
Modifiers: +10 indoors or in fog; –10 in open windy ground; –20 if someone is actively shouting or fighting.

Reed-Cup Refreshment

Range/Area: Touch (a cup, bowl, or waterskin)
Duration: Immediate; water is purified and cool
Power: 1
Description: A reed or sprig is dipped and turned three times; the water clears, bitterness leaves, and a faint scent of rain replaces rot-taste. It cannot create water, but it makes questionable water safer and more palatable.
Modifiers: +10 at a well/ford; –20 if the source is actively tainted by rot or brine influence (may still work as a Lesser Win).

Bread-Seed Ration

Range/Area: Touch (your palm, a cloth, or a small plate)
Duration: Food persists for 1 hour; then becomes tasteless crumbs
Power: 1
Description: You press a crumb, a grain, or even an empty gesture of hunger into cloth; a plain, sustaining ration forms—dense oat-bread, a strip of dried apple, or a small cheese-curd. It is never luxurious, but it keeps a body moving.
Modifiers: +10 if you have *any* real food to "seed" it; –20 if you are Spent (Essence 0) or starving; Disadvantage in iron-heavy spaces.

Guest-Salt Mark

Range/Area: Touch (a doorframe, threshold stone, or table edge)
Duration: Until sunrise or until deliberately wiped away
Power: 1
Description: You draw a thin line of salt and speak a courtesy phrase; those who cross the mark feel the social weight of guest-right settle on their shoulders. It doesn't physically stop violence, but it makes breaches *harder to excuse* and easier to enforce socially.
Modifiers: +10 if host consents; –20 if the place is already in open conflict; +10 under witness (hearth/stone/well nearby).

Knot-Hold (Cord that Remembers)

Range/Area: Touch (a cord, rope, strap, or binding)
Duration: 10 minutes (Power 1) or 1 hour (Lesser Win may shorten)
Power: 1
Description: You tie a simple knot and "tell it" what it is for; the cord tightens with intent and refuses to slip. Useful for quick climbs, binding doors, securing packs, or restraining someone without cruel injury.
Modifiers: +10 with proper cord; –10 if improvised; –20 if the target struggles violently or the cord is wet and fraying.

Lantern-Refusal (Light that Won't Betray)

Range/Area: Touch (lamp, lantern, candle)
Duration: 30 minutes
Power: 1
Description: You cup the flame and whisper refusal; the light remains enough to see by, but it does not throw far or draw eyes. To distant watchers it appears like a dim glow or a blink behind reed-shadow.
Modifiers: +10 in fog or reeds; –20 in open night with no cover; –10 if the flame is already bright and high.

Borrowed Scent

Range/Area: Touch (your clothing, a cloak, or a small bundle)
Duration: 1 hour
Power: 1
Description: You rub crushed leaf and breathe a name of place: peat, bracken, salt-spray, smoke. Your scent shifts—enough to confuse hounds and make you feel like "part of the land" rather than a chased thing.
Modifiers: +10 with local plants; –20 against trained hounds up close; +10 if combined with Stealth positioning.

Pebble-Memory (Mark without Writing)

Range/Area: Touch (stone, bead, bone token)
Duration: Until deliberately "unspoken" (typically days)
Power: 1
Description: You whisper a short message into a pebble and wrap it in cord; when the intended recipient holds it and breathes once, the message comes as a brief sensory impression—tone, direction, a single sentence's worth of meaning.
Modifiers: +10 if you know the recipient well; –20 if the

pebble is handled by many strangers first; Disadvantage if iron clasps bind the token.

Door-Forgetfulness

Range/Area: Near (a single door, gate, or narrow passage)
Duration: 10 minutes
Power: 2
Description: You brush the frame with the back of your knuckles and "ask" it to stop being memorable. Watchers who glance away lose the thread of what they were watching; the door becomes background, and your passing doesn't stick in the mind.
Modifiers: +10 if you pass quickly and quietly; –20 if someone is staring directly at you; Disadvantage if the door is iron-banded.

Mist-Veil Mantle

Range/Area: Self + Near (up to a small group walking close together)
Duration: 10–20 minutes
Power: 2
Description: You wet two fingers and draw a line across your brow; the air around you thickens into a low mist that clings to ankles and hedges. It doesn't make you invisible, but it breaks outlines and makes distance judgment unreliable—perfect for slipping a net.
Modifiers: +10 in damp weather; –20 in dry wind; +10 if moving slowly and low; –10 if sprinting.

Mirror-Blink (Truth Glint)

Range/Area: Touch (mirror shard, bowl surface, polished stone)
Duration: Immediate glimpse (a few breaths)
Power: 2
Description: You tilt a reflective surface and ask it a yes/no question; the reflection answers with a subtle wrongness—an extra shadow, a ripple, a brief stain of color—indicating deceit, rot influence, or hidden presence *in the immediate scene*.
Modifiers: +10 under good light; –20 in darkness; –10 if the question is complex or self-deceptive.

Courtesy-Unmask (Reveal the Masked Name)

Range/Area: Near (one target you can address)
Duration: 1 scene (or until the target escapes)
Power: 2
Description: You speak a formal courtesy that forces a moment of social "clarity." The target's disguise doesn't drop like theater—it frays: accents slip, posture changes, glamour edges show, and others notice inconsistencies that were previously ignored.
Modifiers: +10 under witness (well/stone/hearth); –20 if the target is deeply entrenched in a crowd; Disadvantage if you are publicly discredited in the hall.

Thread-Stitch (Mend the Small Tear)

Range/Area: Touch (cloth, leather, strap, net, minor tool binding)
Duration: Permanent (for minor repairs)
Power: 2
Description: You draw a thread through your teeth, spit once, and stitch without needle; fibers knit as if they remember being whole. This cannot repair shattered metal or major breaks, but it can keep gear from failing at the worst time.
Modifiers: +10 if the item is Sídhe-made or well cared for; –20 if the item is ruined beyond simple repair; –10 if rushed.

Hearth-Table Plenty (The Small Feast)

Range/Area: Near (a table, blanket spread, or hearth circle; up to ~6 people)
Duration: 1 hour; leftovers fade into dry crumbs after
Power: 3
Description: You lay three offerings—salt, breath, and a story—and the space answers with warmth: bowls of stew, oatcakes, berries, and small meat portions appear as if the hall itself fed you. It feels like being *inside*; morale lifts, and the room's tension loosens for a while.
Modifiers: +10 if performed in a true sanctuary or honored guest-space; –20 in a place of recent hospitality breach; Disadvantage if iron is close to the hearth.

Thorn-Whisper Flick

Range/Area: Short (across a room or small clearing)
Duration: Instant
Power: 1
Description: You snap a thorn or twig and flick it; it becomes a stinging lash of bramble-pain that bites exposed skin and hands. It's not a killing blast—more like sudden cruelty from the hedge that forces a flinch or drop.
Combat: Damage: as a *Light* weapon (non-iron). **Special:** on a Win, the target must either give ground, drop a held small item, or suffer a minor distraction (Director choice).
Modifiers: +10 if the target has bare skin/exposed hands; –20 in heavy rain; –10 if the target wears thick gear.

Breath-Steal (One-Beat Silence)

Range/Area: Near (one target you can see)
Duration: A heartbeat (enough to interrupt)
Power: 2
Description: You speak a clipped refusal and pinch the air; the target's breath catches as if they swallowed wrong. It's a tiny cruelty used to stop a shout, interrupt a charge, or break a chant mid-phrase.
Combat: Damage: none by default. **Effect:** on a Win, the target loses their next clear shout/chant and is briefly off-rhythm; Directors commonly treat this as positioning for Advantage for your next action or Disadvantage for theirs (choose one, based on fiction).
Modifiers: +10 if the target was already speaking/shouting; –20 if they are calm and silent; Disadvantage if the target is iron-hardened and trained against Sídhe tricks.

Cord-Snare Shadow

Range/Area: Near (one target within a few paces)
Duration: Instant bind; holds for a few breaths unless reinforced by fiction
Power: 2
Description: A loop of cord-shadow whips from your hand and catches ankle or wrist like a thrown lasso. It doesn't hold forever, but it creates the crucial stumble—enough to escape, tackle, or prevent a blade swing.
Combat: Damage: none. **Effect:** on a Win, the target is briefly restrained/off-balance; treat as a positional advantage (often Advantage to a follow-up grapple/escape).
Modifiers: +10 if you have an actual cord token in hand; –20 if the target has free space to leap away; –10 on slick ground where you can't anchor the pull.

Stone-Bruise Gesture

Range/Area: Touch (your fist to stone/ground) → Near (one target standing on that ground)
Duration: Instant
Power: 2
Description: You knock your knuckles to earth and "wake" its grievance; the ground under a target's foot bites up—stone-hard shock through bone and heel. It's subtle, cruel, and often mistaken for bad footing rather than magick.
Combat: Damage: as a *Light* weapon (non-iron). **Special:** on a Win, target also loses clean footing (stumble/backstep) if the terrain supports it.
Modifiers: +10 on rocky ground; –20 on soft sand or deep mud; –10 if the target is mounted.

Name-Ward Breath (Hold Your Self)

Range/Area: Self (or Touch for a willing ally)
Duration: 1 scene
Power: 2
Description: You breathe into a knot or ring and wear it; your identity "sets" like a locked jaw. Coercion slides off more easily, and attempts to pull at your true name, shame, or fear meet a steadier core.
Effect: Not immunity—positioning. On scenes involving identity pressure (interrogation, humiliation, true-name bait, panic coercion), this often justifies **+10** or helps negate a situational penalty, at the Director's discretion.
Modifiers: +10 if performed calmly before conflict; –20 if you are already panicked or publicly shamed; Disadvantage if iron is actively touching your skin.

Notes on Balance and Tone

- Most General workings are **Power 1–2**. That's intentional. These are the daily tools of fading people.
- **Power 3** should feel like a *moment* (the small feast, a major hush, a serious threshold refusal).

- Harmful workings are primarily *disruptive* rather than lethal, and they use normal weapon-like logic when they deal damage.

CHAPTER 12: THE SIX SCHOOLS

General Fae Magick (Chapter 11) is what all Sídhe share: hearth-breath, token tricks, hushes, small veils, the daily customs that keep a fading people alive. A **School** is what happens when a Sídhe goes deeper—training a particular relationship with the world until it becomes reliable craft.

Each School is a *way of persuading reality*:

- with **attention** (Glamour)
- with **terms** (Oathcraft)
- with **thresholds** (Hollow Ways)
- with **warmth and ward** (Hearthward)
- with **reflection and omen** (Well & Mirror)
- with **pact and form** (Beastpact)

These are not "spell lists" in the wizard sense. They are *folk practices refined into discipline.*

Selection Rules

Choose ONE School

At character creation, every Protagonist has access in principle to **General Fae Magick**, but each Protagonist may commit to **only one School**. This is the module's core limiter.

One Skill Governs All Magick

All General and School workings use:

- **Sídhe Magick (Intellect)** as the roll skill
- **Essence** as fuel (Essence cost = Power)
- the One-on-One d100 engine (Win / Lesser Win / Loss)

Action and Cost

- **Main action** to attempt a working, unless the working says otherwise.
- Pay **Essence equal to Power** *before* rolling (success or failure still costs).

Schools Don't Replace Skills

Schools don't "solve everything." They give you specialized options that are:

- more reliable, more potent, or more flexible than General workings
- *but* still limited by Essence, pressure, witness, iron, and consequences

What If You Didn't Choose a School?

You may still learn a School later, but it should require:

- a teacher, a sanctuary tradition, a bargain, or a long arc of practice
- Director permission and story investment
(Still only one School total.)

Power Guidance for Schools

Most School workings sit at **Power 1–3**.
Power 4–5 should be rare and story-defining; this chapter includes a few Power 4 options explicitly marked.

Reminder: Power is scope/weight. Harmful workings (when present) deal weapon-like damage as listed.

Quick School Index

- **Glamour (The Seen-Unseen)** — attention, seeming, size-misdirection, crowd memory
- **Oathcraft (The Spoken-Bound)** — terms, geisa, sanction, hospitality enforcement
- **Hollow Ways (The Between-Road)** — thresholds, route folding, carrying others, "impossible" travel
- **Hearthward (The Warm Law)** — refuge wards, healing, steadiness, sanctuary resilience
- **Well & Mirror (The Deep Answer)** — omen, reflection truth, rot-sense, spirit address

- **Beastpact (The Wild Accord)** — shapechange, animal communion, borrowed movement, pact marks

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Casting Reminders for All Schools

Typical modifiers:

- +10 proper implement + correct form
- +10 appropriate witness (hearth for Hearthward, threshold for Hollow Ways, etc.)
- –10 rushed / improvised
- –10 to –20 panic, battle-motion, chaos
- Disadvantage and/or –20 in heavy iron presence (especially at thresholds/forges/bells)

Player Quick-Reference: Choosing Your School

If you want...

- **to vanish in crowds, change how you're remembered, misdirect pursuit:** choose **Glamour**
- **to bind deals, enforce guest-right, lay geisa, sanction betrayal:** choose **Oathcraft**
- **to fold distance, open the impossible, carry others, break pursuit routes:** choose **Hollow Ways**
- **to protect sanctuaries, heal, steady fear, resist rot pressure:** choose **Hearthward**
- **to read omens, expose lies, sense rot, bargain for answers:** choose **Well & Mirror**
- **to become beast, speak wild, borrow senses and movement:** choose **Beastpact**

Using These Workings at the Table

- Pick the working that matches your intent.
- Pay Essence = Power.
- Roll d100 vs **modified Sídhe Magick**.
- Resolve as Win / Lesser Win / Loss.
- If the effect is big for the scene, the Director should attach **tells, consequences, or Clock pressure**—especially for Power 3+.

CHAPTER 13: GLAMOUR

Glamour is the School of the **Seen-Unseen**: not illusion-as-theater, but **attention-as-law**. A Glamour-worker doesn't create a new world; they persuade the waking world to *tell itself a different story* about what it sees, hears, remembers, and measures.

In Éire, Glamour is not "party tricks." It is how the People survive when the human net tightens. It makes a pursuer miscount bodies in a doorway. It makes a priest remember "a traveler" and not "a Sídhe." It makes a hunted Protagonist pass through a market without leaving a hook in the mind.

Glamour is also dangerous. It invites the oldest kind of backlash: not lightning from the sky, but **wrongness**. The more you edit reality's story, the more reality begins to notice your handwriting.

What Glamour Can and Can't Do

Glamour Can...

- soften attention; "blur" you into background
- alter perceived identity (face, posture, accent edges)
- change apparent scale (seem taller/shorter, nearer/farther)
- plant *suggestions* that feel like "the obvious next thing"
- create brief sensory misdirection (false sound, wrong glance)
- loosen memory of a single identifying detail

Glamour Can't...

- heal wounds (Hearthward)
- bind true oaths/geisa (Oathcraft)
- fold distance or open thresholds reliably (Hollow Ways)
- provide true prophecy (Well & Mirror)
- grant real animal bodies beyond superficial traits (Beastpact)
- permanently rewrite a community's shared record (especially if written)

Glamour is strongest at **the edge of certainty**: crowds, dusk, fog, motion, partial attention. It is weakest under **hard scrutiny**, **iron pressure**, **bright noon clarity**, and **witness that does not tolerate lies**.

Glamour Forms and Implements

Glamour almost always needs a "handle" on attention:

Common implements

- mirror shard, polished stone, bowl surface
- comb, ribbon, bright thread, dyed cord
- borrowed cap/hood, cloak pin, a ring touched to tongue
- a "travel-name" spoken correctly (not a True Name)

Common offerings

- a story fragment ("I was here, but not as myself")
- a small token placed where eyes will pass
- breath into a mirror (fog as permission)

Positioning reminders

- +10 proper implement + calm form
- +10 fog/crowd/low light (where attention is already slippery)
- –10 rushed, panicked, wounded, or forced
- –20 bright open scrutiny or hostile interrogation
- Disadvantage and/or –20 near heavy iron (bells, chains, forgework, iron-banded doors)

Glamour in Play: The Three Levers

Most Glamour scenes are one of three levers. Name which you're pulling; it keeps adjudication fast:

1. **Seeming:** what they perceive in the moment (face, size, outline, voice edge)
2. **Misdirection:** what they look at (eyes elsewhere, false sound, wrong path)
3. **Unremembering:** what sticks afterward (the hook that would identify you)

If a working tries to do all three at once, it usually requires higher Power, stronger tells, or a cost/complication on a Lesser Win.

Resistance to Glamour (Targeted Workings)

If Glamour is directed at a person (suggestion, unmasking, fear-glare via seeming, etc.), targets can resist as described in the Magick resistance rules:

- passive resistance via positioning (–10/–20 or Disadvantage to the caster)
- active resistance as a contested action using appropriate skills (Insight, Command, Endure Pain, Lore: Sídhe/Tokencraft, etc.)

Glamour is hardest to land on:

- someone who knows you well
- someone under strong witness and formal scrutiny
- someone trained and expecting Sídhe deception (iron-hunters, oath-keepers)
- someone holding iron close or standing in iron-saturated spaces

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Glamour "Tells" and Backlash (Setting Pressure)

Glamour leaves traces. Directors should use tells and pressure to keep the School sharp and costly at the right moments—without punishing creativity.

Minor Tells (often for Power 1–2)

- a faint scent of peat-smoke or sweet damp air
- eyes reflecting light "wrong" for a heartbeat
- your shadow lagging half a step behind
- a ribbon/thread appearing on your clothing that wasn't there
- nearby animals becoming briefly silent

Major Tells (often for Power 3+ or repeated use)

- someone experiences déjà vu when looking at you
- a child points and says "that's not their face"
- a mirror cracks hairline without impact
- a crowd becomes uneasy, as if a cold draft moved through it
- attention spikes: rumors start carrying your "shape" even if details are wrong

When a Glamour working is used loudly, repeatedly, or unjustly, the Director should consider:

- a **consequence** (identity strain, social suspicion, shame backlash)
- an **Attention Clock** tick
- a new complication: a witness, a storyteller, a jealous court agent

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Glamour Techniques

Market-Face (Blend into the Waking Crowd)

- **Power:** 2
- **Range/Area:** Self
- **Duration:** 1 scene (while you keep moving naturally)
- **Description:** Your features settle into the "shape" of the market: tired eyes, ordinary posture, the right kind of hurry. In motion, you look like you belong; in stillness, the spell thins.
- **Modifiers:** +10 in crowds; –20 if you stand alone and still; Disadvantage if a pursuer is staring directly at you from close range.

Cloak-Weight (Authority of Cloth)

- **Power:** 2
- **Range/Area:** Self
- **Duration:** 1 scene
- **Description:** Your cloak and bearing gain social gravity. People step aside as if you have business; questions come slower; hesitation favors you. It's not mind control—just the world "agreeing" you are important enough to avoid.
- **Modifiers:** +10 in formal spaces (hall, gate, road checkpoint); –20 if you are visibly ragged or bleeding; +10 if you carry an appropriate token.

Hedge-Pattern (Camouflage of the Familiar)

- **Power:** 1
- **Range/Area:** Self
- **Duration:** 10 minutes
- **Description:** Your colors and outlines echo nearby textures—reed, stone, bark. It's subtle: you're still there, but you become the sort of shape people must *choose* to notice.
- **Modifiers:** +10 in vegetation/ruins; –20 on open beach or bare snow; –10 if you move fast.

The Quiet Fifth (Make the Group Miscount You)

- **Power:** 2
- **Range/Area:** Self (works best while in a group)
- **Duration:** 10 minutes
- **Description:** When heads turn and numbers are counted, you fall out of the count. A patrol counts "four" when there are five; a gate guard waves the "last one" through without really seeing them.
- **Modifiers:** +10 if you are literally among others; –20 if you are alone; Disadvantage if the observer is deliberately recounting.

Hook-Slip (Lose the Identifying Detail)

- **Power:** 2
- **Range/Area:** Near (one witness who interacted with you)
- **Duration:** Permanent (for one detail)
- **Description:** You loosen a single "hook" that would identify you: your cloak pin, your travel-name, your distinctive hair, the sound of your laugh. The witness can still remember the encounter, but the hook won't stay fixed.
- **Modifiers:** +10 if used immediately after contact; –20 if the witness has written it down; Disadvantage if the witness is under strong oath or formal record-keeping.

False Familiar (Make Them Assume They Know You)

- **Power:** 3
- **Range/Area:** Near (one target or a small cluster)
- **Duration:** 1 scene
- **Description:** You become *almost* familiar—like a cousin's friend or someone seen at a fair years ago. They hesitate to challenge you because their mind offers a plausible explanation for your presence.
- **Modifiers:** +10 in social spaces; –20 if the target is suspicious by nature or actively hunting; Disadvantage if the target has iron-taught training against Sídhe tricks.

Far-Near Twist (Misjudge Reach)

- **Power:** 2
- **Range/Area:** Near (one watcher/attacker)
- **Duration:** 10 minutes
- **Description:** Their sense of distance warps. A thrown stone falls short; a spear thrust overreaches; an archer misjudges lead and wind.
- **Combat:** On a Win, the Director commonly applies **–10** to the target's ranged attacks against you (or

your group) for the duration, or grants **Advantage** to your evasive movement—choose based on fiction.

- **Modifiers:** +10 in fog/low light; –20 in bright open noon; –10 if the attacker is stationary and carefully measuring.

Voice-Fold (Accent and Timbre Shift)

- **Power:** 1
- **Range/Area:** Self
- **Duration:** 10 minutes
- **Description:** Your voice changes just enough: vowels settle into local cadence, sharpness softens, your breath timing shifts. It won't mimic a specific person perfectly, but it breaks recognition and buys you a conversation.
- **Modifiers:** +10 if you've heard the local dialect recently; –20 if someone knows your voice well; Disadvantage if you're shouting over noise.

Moth-Wing Panic (Eyes Elsewhere, Hearts Racing)

- **Power:** 2
- **Range/Area:** Near (small area—doorway, corner, hedge gap)
- **Duration:** 1 minute
- **Description:** A flicker of "something wrong" passes through the edge of sight—like moths exploding from a crack. People startle, turn, and lose rhythm; guards glance away when they shouldn't.
- **Combat/Scene:** Often used to create an opening; on a Win, treat as strong positioning for escape/infiltration (commonly Advantage for a single follow-up action).
- **Modifiers:** +10 in dim light; –20 in full sun; –10 if the area is already chaotic (harder to direct attention).

Mirror-Claim (Make the Glamour Stick Under Scrutiny)

- **Power:** 4
- **Range/Area:** Self
- **Duration:** 1 scene (but leaves a tell)
- **Description:** You press a mirror shard to your skin and "claim" your current seeming as the truth for a little while. The disguise becomes harder to pierce; even focused observers struggle to find the seam unless they have strong countermeasures.
- **Modifiers:** +10 at dusk/dawn; –20 at hard noon; Disadvantage if iron is present; **Tell:** mirrors and reflections around you may hairline-crack or briefly show your true eyes.

Using Glamour Without Breaking the Game

Glamour is powerful because it changes *who gets to decide what's real* in a scene. Keep it clean by following three principles:

1. **Glamour creates openings; it doesn't erase the campaign's problems.**
2. **Strong Glamour draws attention later, even if it wins now.**
3. **Written records and hard witness are the long-term enemies of Glamour.**

A Protagonist can survive a patrol with Glamour. Surviving a monastery ledger is another story.

CHAPTER 14: OATHCRAFT

Oathcraft is the School of the **Spoken-Bound**. In Éire, words do not merely *describe* obligations—they **create** them. A vow is not a feeling. A bargain is not a handshake. A breach is not a private shame. Under witness, speech is a tool that bites.

Where Glamour persuades attention, Oathcraft persuades **terms**. It makes social law physically present: a tightness in the throat when you mean to lie, a heaviness in the hand when you mean to strike under guest-right, a cold weight behind the eyes when you owe what you promised.

Oathcraft is also the most perilous School to the careless. It is easy to bind others; it is even easier to bind yourself. In *The Fading*, many Sídhe do not die by blade—they die by **the trap of their own words**, spoken proud in a hall, then tested by a world that no longer wants them.

What Oathcraft Can and Can't Do

Oathcraft Can...

- formalize bargains so hidden terms become harder to hide
- enforce hospitality and guest-right (make breach "heavier" and more visible)
- bind **geisa** (prohibitions/obligations) when properly witnessed
- attach sanctions that follow a breaker for days or weeks
- read the "direction" of obligation (who owes whom)
- pause violence for a heartbeat with the force of social law

Oathcraft Can't...

- heal flesh (Hearthward)
- open routes and fold distance (Hollow Ways)
- see true futures (Well & Mirror)
- become beasts (Beastpact)
- reliably disguise identity (Glamour)

Oathcraft is strongest where **custom already matters**: halls, sanctuaries, markets with long memory, treaty stones, fords where oaths were historically sworn. It weakens in places where speech is treated as disposable—though even there, Oathcraft can still bite if you find a witness.

Witness Is the Engine

Oathcraft is not fueled only by Essence. It is fueled by **witness**.

A witness can be:

- a person recognized as credible (host, elder, oath-keeper, respected outsider)
- a place that "remembers" terms (standing stone, hearth, well, boundary ford)
- a token treated as witness (knotcord touched by both parties, shared cup, ring marked in salt)

Witness Positioning

- **Strong witness present:** commonly **+10** (sometimes +20 if perfect)
- **No credible witness:** commonly **–10** (or the Director may rule a geis-level working is not possible)
- **Hostile or corrupted witness (breached sanctuary, rot-taint):** often **Disadvantage**

Oathcraft is a School that should *pull you toward scenes*: you want stones, hearths, formal spaces, witnesses you can trust.

The Price of Words

Oathcraft is not "free power." It creates **hooks**—in both directions.

When you bind someone else, you often become responsible for:

- enforcing the terms fairly
- honoring your side of the bargain

- carrying the social consequences if you used unjustly

When you bind yourself, you create:

- a pressure lever the Director can pull later
- a source of dramatic "Lesser Win" outcomes (you keep the vow, but it costs you)

In this module, Oathcraft should never feel like a loophole machine. It should feel like *a blade you hold by the edge*.

Directed Workings and Resistance

Oathcraft frequently targets a person directly (truth pressure, geisa, sanction). Use the resistance guidance already established:

- passive resistance via positioning (prepared, stubborn, iron-bolstered targets impose −10/−20 or Disadvantage)
- active resistance as contested action using relevant skills:
    - **Command (PRE)** to refuse coercion
    - **Endure Pain (END)** to endure truth-price or sanction sting
    - **Insight (AWR)** to detect and step around hooks
    - **Lore: Sídhe / Tokencraft (INT)** to recognize terms and break leverage

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Oathcraft Tells and Backlash

Oathcraft is socially loud. Even small workings can leave marks.

Common Tells

- salt taste in the air
- breath fogging slightly even in warmth
- knotcord tightening on its own
- a faint chime heard by those who care about oaths
- a momentary "stillness" like a hall holding its breath

Backlash Patterns

If the Protagonist uses Oathcraft unjustly, sloppily, or greedily, the world pushes back with consequences:

- **Reputation stain:** word spreads you twist terms
- **Witness refusal:** stones and hearths "go cold" to your voice
- **Sanction rebound:** your own luck frays; you become easier to bind
- **Attention pressure:** those who police terms (oath-keepers, clergy, courts) take interest

A Director should not slap backlash on every roll. Use it when:

- the working is Power 3+
- the scene is formally witnessed
- the Protagonist's terms are morally dubious
- the Protagonist is stacking oaths to cheat survival pressure

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Oathcraft Techniques

Cupbound Courtesy (Seal the Shared Drink)

- **Power:** 1
- **Range/Area:** Touch (a cup/bowl shared by two parties)
- **Duration:** 1 scene
- **Description:** You touch rim to lip and speak a brief courtesy; for the rest of the scene, outright betrayal between the drinkers feels "wrong" in the body—hands hesitate, voices catch. It doesn't prevent harm, but it creates a strong social and psychological brake.
- **Modifiers:** +10 if both parties drink willingly; −20 if one party is coerced; Disadvantage if iron cups or iron-bound vessels are used.

Terms-Laid Clear (No Hidden Clause)

- **Power:** 2
- **Range/Area:** Near (negotiation space)
- **Duration:** 1 scene
- **Description:** You flatten the air with a palm and speak clarity; evasions become harder to maintain. Participants can still lie, but omissions feel heavier and contradictions become easier to spot in the moment.
- **Modifiers:** +10 under witness stone/hearth; –20 in shouting chaos; +10 if you present a physical token representing the bargain.

The Honest Throat (Truth-Price Aura)

- **Power:** 2
- **Range/Area:** Near (one target you are conversing with)
- **Duration:** 1 scene
- **Description:** If the target speaks a direct lie in response to your questions, their throat stings, their voice cracks, and the lie becomes socially obvious to those present. They can refuse to answer, but lying becomes costly.
- **Modifiers:** +10 with a credible witness present; –20 if the target is silent and guarded; Disadvantage if the target is trained to endure pain without reaction.

Knot of Return (The Promise That Pulls)

- **Power:** 2
- **Range/Area:** Touch (knotcord)
- **Duration:** Until fulfilled (typically days)
- **Description:** You tie a knotcord to a promised task *—bring the message*, *return the token*, *come back to the ford by moonrise*. As the deadline nears, the cord warms and tugs; if the bearer tries to abandon the task, discomfort grows.
- **Modifiers:** +10 if the promise is specific and time-bound; –20 if vague; –10 if the bearer never touched the cord during binding.

Door of Guest-Right (Threshold Law)

- **Power:** 2
- **Range/Area:** Touch (threshold/doorframe)
- **Duration:** 1 night
- **Description:** You speak the old guest-law and mark the frame. Those who enter with hostile intent feel a brief heaviness—enough to slow a sudden rush or make a blade-draw obvious and socially charged.
- **Combat:** often justifies **Disadvantage** for the first hostile action taken *inside* by an intruder, or grants **Advantage** to defenders reacting (Director call).
- **Modifiers:** +10 if the host consents; –20 if hospitality is already broken; Disadvantage if iron is set into the threshold.

Geis-Thread (A Minor Binding Without a Hall)

- **Power:** 2
- **Range/Area:** Near (one target)
- **Duration:** Until a near-term condition is met (usually within 1–3 days)
- **Description:** This is a lighter geis than the great hall-bindings: a single prohibition or obligation with a short horizon. It bites as discomfort and misfortune rather than crushing doom, but it is still real.
- **Modifiers:** +10 if the term is fair and specific; –20 if unjust or grandiose; Disadvantage with no witness beyond your own word.

Sanction of Ash (Mark the Breaker)

- **Power:** 3

- **Range/Area:** Near (one target you can name)
- **Duration:** 1 week (or until amends under witness)
- **Description:** You mark a breaker with ash and speak what they did. Small social doors close; hospitality thins; luck frays in petty ways. It doesn't paralyze them, but it makes their life harder until they set it right.
- **Modifiers:** +10 if the breach is witnessed by others; –20 if the breach is secret; Disadvantage if you are not seen as credible.

Pause of Courtesy (Stay the Strike)

- **Power:** 2
- **Range/Area:** Near (one attacker)
- **Duration:** A heartbeat
- **Description:** You throw a phrase like a palm between blades. The attacker's body recognizes a social boundary and hesitates—just long enough for a parry, a retreat, or a desperate bargain.
- **Combat:** no damage; on a Win, treat as positional swing—often Advantage to your next defensive/escape action.
- **Modifiers:** +10 if guest-right applies; –20 if the attacker is in frenzy; Disadvantage if iron rage/rot frenzy is driving them.

Debt-Taste (Weigh Obligation)

- **Power:** 1
- **Range/Area:** Near (conversation distance)
- **Duration:** Immediate
- **Description:** You taste the air after a promise is spoken: salt means sincere obligation, copper means reluctant debt, bitter means deception. This doesn't prove facts; it reveals the *shape* of intent and debt.
- **Modifiers:** +10 if a promise was just spoken; –20 if you're probing old history; –10 in loud distracting environments.

Stone-Claim Judgment (Bind the Moment to the Place)

- **Power:** 4
- **Range/Area:** Touch (standing stone/ancient boundary)
- **Duration:** Until the dispute is resolved
- **Description:** You anchor a dispute to a place: the stone "remembers" the terms. Those who break the adjudicated agreement near the stone suffer immediate backlash—stumbling, nausea, shame heat, and social recognition of breach.
- **Modifiers:** +10 at ancient boundary stones; –20 if the stone is moved/defaced; Disadvantage if the place is tainted or mocked by iron signs.

Running Oathcraft Cleanly

Oathcraft can derail campaigns if treated like a legal exploit. Use these table principles:

1. **Terms must be clear.** If the player cannot say it plainly, the world won't bind it cleanly.
2. **Witness matters.** Big bindings need a real witness (place or person).
3. **Fairness matters.** Unjust bindings invite backlash and social consequences.
4. **Breach creates story.** A broken oath should become a plot engine—sanctions, feuds, debt arcs—rather than a dead end.

Oathcraft and Clocks (Éire Guidance)

Oathcraft is one of the best Schools for interacting with pressure without deleting it.

Common Clock interactions:

- **Delay:** "Pause of Courtesy" buys time—tick delayed, not erased.

- **Redirect:** A sanction shifts attention from you to the breaker (temporarily).
- **Stabilize:** Guest-right wards can slow a sanctuary's collapse Clock.
- **Escalate:** If you bind unfairly, Attention and Rival Court Clocks may advance.

CHAPTER 15: HOLLOW WAYS

Hollow Ways is the School of the **Between-Road**: the craft of thresholds, folds, and the polite trespass of distance. Where mortal travel is miles and hours, Hollow Ways is **permission and alignment**—finding the seam where two places touch in the old sense and stepping through before the seam remembers to close.

This is not "teleportation." It is folklore travel: slipping into a hedge and coming out at a sister hedge; crossing a ford without leaving a trail; taking a wrong step and finding yourself back where you began; carrying another on the wind's shoulder; persuading a wall to be a door for one brief breath.

Hollow Ways is also the most **attention-generating** School in the waking world. People accept lies more readily than they accept violations of space. A Glamour can be dismissed as a trick of the eye. A Hollow Way crossing leaves a different kind of rumor: *they were not where they should have been.*

What Hollow Ways Can and Can't Do

Hollow Ways Can...

- open simple locks and latches without keys (especially non-iron)
- find and use thin places: hedges, standing stones, old roads, fords
- shorten travel by folding "far" into "near"
- break pursuit by unwriting a trail
- bar a threshold behind you briefly (refusal)
- carry companions through a fold if they stay close and consent
- correct a wrong turn by rethreading a path (limited)

Hollow Ways Can't...

- make you immune to being seen (Glamour)
- bind bargains, enforce guest-right, or lay geisa (Oathcraft)
- heal wounds or stabilize sanctuaries (Hearthward)
- grant prophecy or truth beyond thin-place sense (Well & Mirror)
- safely ignore iron-banded thresholds without consequence

Hollow Ways is a travel School, but it is also a **discipline of etiquette**. Doors are people. Fords are moods. Hedges are jealous. If you move through the Between-Road arrogantly, the road will eventually take payment.

The Three Laws of Hollow Ways

These aren't "rules" the system enforces with math; they are the table truths Directors should apply consistently as modifiers, consequences, and Clock pressure.

Law I: Thresholds Have Owners

A threshold is never neutral. A door belongs to a house. A ford belongs to the river. A hedge belongs to the hedge. Even "abandoned" places remember who they used to answer to.

- If you have **permission** (guest-right, bargain, route token), Hollow Ways is cleaner.
- If you are trespassing, Hollow Ways still works—but it leaves tells and invites pursuit.

Law II: The Between Demands Closeness

When carrying others through Hollow Ways, they must:

- be **willing** (or at least not actively resisting)
- stay **close** (hand, cord, cloak hem, shared breath)
- keep **quiet** (panic breaks alignment)

If a carried companion panics or breaks contact, expect a Lesser Win or a consequence: separation, wrong exit, time loss, or attention spike.

Law III: Iron Defines "No"

Iron is the waking world's signature refusal. Iron-banded doors, iron keys, iron chains, iron nails, iron bells—these are all the human way of telling the land: **stay put.**

In heavy iron contexts, Hollow Ways often faces:

- **Disadvantage**

- **–20** (or more severe consequence framing)
- greater chance of backlash (see Section 6)

Implements, Tokens, and Route-Craft

Hollow Ways works best with practical "route tools":

Common implements

- a **route cord** (knotted in specific patterns)
- a **ford stone** carried in a pouch
- a **door breath charm** (small key-shaped token not made of iron)
- a strip of hedge-thorn wrapped in cloth
- a small map scratched into wood or bone

Common offerings

- a coin to water (for fords)
- bread crumb to hedge roots
- a spoken courtesy to a door's "face"
- leaving something small behind (a thread, a hair, a story fragment)

Positioning reminders

- +10 if you've walked the route before or have a relevant token
- +10 if you are calm and aligned (not panicked, not rushed)
- –10 if improvised, rushed, or distracted
- –20 if pursued hard, wounded, or in a place that rejects you
- Disadvantage and/or –20 in iron-saturated areas

Hollow Ways and the Chase

Hollow Ways is excellent at changing the *shape* of pursuit, but it shouldn't delete pressure.

Directors should frame Hollow Ways wins as:

- "You're out—**but** your route is compromised."
- "You're gone—**but** they know which sanctuary you favor."
- "You're safe—**but** the Attention Clock ticks anyway."
- "You escape—**but** you come out somewhere worse."

Hollow Ways creates **Lesser Wins** that keep campaigns alive.

Directed Resistance (When the World Pushes Back)

Hollow Ways is rarely "targeted" at a person, but it is often opposed by:

- locked doors, iron craft, watchful wards
- pursuers acting in direct contest (chase scenes)
- spirits and place-owners who "deny" passage

Use the normal One-on-One contest and consequence logic:

- opposed skill rolls when someone actively counters your crossing
- or passive resistance via positioning penalties when the threshold is hostile/iron-strong

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Hollow Ways Backlash: The Between Takes Payment

Hollow Ways has the most flavorful backlash in the module. Use it when:

- Power 3+ folds are done repeatedly in a short span
- a crossing is forced through iron refusal
- the Protagonist trespasses without courtesy
- a carried companion panics and tears the seam

Backlash examples

- **Wrong Exit:** you arrive near the intended place, but not inside it (or in a compromised location)

- **Time Slip:** you arrive later than intended (lost minutes become hours)
- **Place-Notice:** a local presence takes interest, demands a token later
- **Route Burn:** this thin place becomes unreliable for a while
- **Attention Spike:** witnesses don't know what they saw, but they talk

Backlash is not punishment. It's how the School stays mythic.

Hollow Ways Techniques

Door-Smile (Make the Threshold Friendly)

- **Power:** 1
- **Range/Area:** Touch (doorframe, gatepost, narrow passage)
- **Duration:** 10 minutes
- **Description:** You stroke the frame with knuckles and offer a brief courtesy; hinges quiet, boards stop creaking, and the passage "wants" you to move through without fuss. This doesn't unlock iron locks, but it reduces the threshold's tendency to betray you with noise.
- **Modifiers:** +10 if you address the door respectfully; –20 if the place has recently seen violence; Disadvantage if the door is iron-banded.

Pebble-Path Marker (Return to This Spot)

- **Power:** 1
- **Range/Area:** Touch (a stone token you place)
- **Duration:** 1 day
- **Description:** You set a pebble and speak "here" into it. For the rest of the day, you can orient to this point through the Between-sense—like a tug behind the ribs—making it easier to navigate fog routes or hedge mazes.
- **Modifiers:** +10 if placed at a thin place; –20 if moved by others; –10 in iron-heavy settlements.

Spill the Footprint (Unwrite the Last Minute)

- **Power:** 2
- **Range/Area:** Near (your immediate trail)
- **Duration:** Immediate effect (trail remains unclear for 1 hour)
- **Description:** You toss a pinch of dust/ash behind you and speak denial; the last minute of signs softens—prints blur, bent grass rises, water ripples stop remembering direction. It won't erase obvious evidence, but it breaks clean tracking.
- **Modifiers:** +10 on soft ground; –20 on bare stone; +10 if used immediately; –10 if the pursuers already saw you make the turn.

Knotted Distance (Fold a Street, Not a Mile)

- **Power:** 2
- **Range/Area:** Self + Near (up to 3 companions holding a cord)
- **Duration:** Immediate
- **Description:** You tie a quick knot pattern and step; a short distance collapses—one street becomes the next, one hedge line becomes its neighbor. It's a "small fold," ideal for city alleys, market escapes, and slipping a patrol line.
- **Modifiers:** +10 in cluttered spaces; –20 in open fields; Disadvantage if any companion breaks contact mid-step.

Shoulder of Wind (Carry One Over the Bog)

- **Power:** 3
- **Range/Area:** Touch (one willing person)
- **Duration:** 10 minutes
- **Description:** You take their wrist and speak the wind's courtesy; for a time you can move together

in long, light bounds, crossing bog-water and broken stone as if your weight is negotiable. It's not true flight, but it feels like the world briefly stopped insisting on gravity's full price.

- **Modifiers:** +10 in open moor; –20 in dense forest or indoors; –20 if the carried person panics or resists.

Ford's Permission (Cross Without Wetting)

- **Power:** 2
- **Range/Area:** Self + Near (small group, up to ~6 close)
- **Duration:** Immediate crossing
- **Description:** You drop a small offering and speak to the water; the ford behaves. Stones rise where you need them, the current gentles, and your crossing leaves minimal sign—no splashing, no obvious churn.
- **Modifiers:** +10 at a known ford; –20 in flood conditions; Disadvantage if the river is "angry" (recent drowning, rot-taint, or violated offering).

Hedge-Thread Gate (A Door in Leaves)

- **Power:** 3
- **Range/Area:** Near (a hedge/brush wall)
- **Duration:** 1 minute
- **Description:** You pull a thread from your clothing and "stitch" it into the hedge; leaves part into a narrow doorway that leads into a short between-space and out the other side. It's quick, quiet, and leaves a faint chill like dew on the tongue.
- **Modifiers:** +10 at dusk/dawn; –20 at hard noon; Disadvantage if the hedge is cut, burned, or iron-fenced.

Route-Refusal (Mislead Pursuit into the Wrong Turn)

- **Power:** 2
- **Range/Area:** Near (a junction, fork, or alley choice)
- **Duration:** 10 minutes
- **Description:** You speak refusal into the junction so it becomes "unhelpful" to those behind you: they pick the wrong line more easily, hesitate longer, or find the path subtly more difficult. It's not mind control—just route bias.
- **Modifiers:** +10 if the junction is a true choice point; –20 if there is only one obvious route; +10 if you leave a decoy token.

Backstep Correction (Undo the Wrong Door)

- **Power:** 2
- **Range/Area:** Self + Near (small group)
- **Duration:** Immediate
- **Description:** If you stepped into danger by mistake, you can rethread the last threshold crossing and "backstep" out as if you never committed to the door. It feels like the world allowing you one clean correction—once.
- **Modifiers:** +10 if used immediately; –20 if the scene has already escalated; Disadvantage if iron wards have fully "noticed" you.

Stone-to-Stone Slip (Boundary Leap)

- **Power:** 4
- **Range/Area:** Self + Near (up to 3 companions linked by cord)
- **Duration:** Immediate
- **Description:** You step from one standing stone or boundary marker to another that shares the same old "name" (a matched pair, a remembered route). The crossing is vivid—ears pop, breath goes cold, and for a second the world is only wind and dark.
- **Modifiers:** +10 if the stones are known to your culture and you carry a route token; –20 if you're forcing an unknown link; Disadvantage if iron bells are sounding or iron is close to either stone.

Director Toolkit: Adjudicating Hollow Ways Fast

When a Hollow Ways attempt succeeds, ask one question:
"What does it cost, or what does it expose?"

Good costs include:

- **route compromise** (future danger)
- **time slip** (pressure advance)
- **tell** (rumor, attention)
- **separation risk** (companion stress)
- **place-owner interest** (new NPC complication)

When it fails, don't just say "it doesn't work." Consider:

- you arrive wrong (but not stuck)
- you get delayed and pressure rises
- the threshold gets "angry" and won't cooperate again soon
- you have to pay an offering you didn't want to pay

CHAPTER 16: HEARTHWARD

Hearthward is the School of the **Warm Law**: the craft of refuge, steadiness, warding, and healing. It is the magic of *inside*—the difference between a people who survive and a people who become stories told by someone else.

Where Hollow Ways moves you through danger, Hearthward makes a place where danger must negotiate. Where Glamour persuades attention, Hearthward persuades **belonging**. Where Oathcraft binds speech, Hearthward binds **care**: clean hands, shared food, watchful embers, and the small rituals that turn a cold room into a sanctuary.

In *The Fading*, Hearthward is not "cleric magic." It is not divine favor. It is the Sídhe remembering how to be a people—on purpose—when the waking world would prefer them scattered.

What Hearthward Can and Can't Do

Hearthward Can...

- establish and strengthen wards around camps, rooms, and sanctuaries
- calm panic, restore steadiness, and reinforce morale
- **heal** in folklore terms: warmth returned, shock eased, wounds cleaned and knit
- detect breaches (hidden iron, rot-taint, broken hospitality)
- resist or blunt rot influence inside a protected space
- create alarms, boundaries, and "inside-law" consequences

Hearthward Can't...

- fold distance and open impossible routes (Hollow Ways)
- bind geisa or enforce bargains with formal sanction (Oathcraft)
- reliably disguise identity or rewrite memory (Glamour)
- produce true prophecy (Well & Mirror)
- become beasts (Beastpact)

Hearthward is strongest where **care is plausible**: a fire, a roof, a watch, a shared meal, a willing host. It weakens where chaos reigns—battlefields, storm-wracked moors, iron-heavy human structures, and places where hospitality has already been broken.

Hearth as Witness, Hearth as Engine

Hearthward is a School of *context*. A ward in a true sanctuary is not the same as a ward in a ditch.

Use these positioning anchors consistently:

- **True hearth, stable shelter:** commonly **+10** (sometimes +20 if ideal)
- **Clean tools, calm ritual: +10**
- **Open storm / no shelter / rushing: −10 to −20**
- **Breached hospitality / hidden iron nearby:** often **Disadvantage**
- **Iron embedded in the structure:** often **Disadvantage** and/or **−20**

A Hearthward worker should want to *make* good conditions: gather wood, clean cloth, set watches, secure guest-right. That's not "busywork." That's how the School becomes powerful.

Healing in The Fading (How It Works)

Hearthward healing follows the One-on-One consequence model: you don't track hit points here. You resolve injuries and harm through consequences and scene outcomes.

What Healing Can Do

Hearthward healing can:

- remove a minor injury consequence
- reduce the severity of a more serious injury consequence
- stabilize someone who would otherwise worsen

- reduce pain/shock so someone can act

What Healing Cannot Do (Without Major Story)

Hearthward healing cannot:

- regrow lost limbs
- undo death
- erase iron's deeper spiritual injury cleanly (iron can be treated, but it often leaves a mark)
- remove all consequences from reckless play

Healing is still powerful because it keeps a duet campaign from ending on one bad wound—*without* turning the Protagonist into an immortal tank.

Hearthward Tells and Backlash

Hearthward is quieter than other Schools, but it still leaves marks.

Common Tells

- the air smells briefly of bread and smoke
- embers glow like eyes for a heartbeat
- a room feels "held" (even outsiders notice calm)
- ash patterns arrange themselves into subtle lines

Backlash (When Care Is Broken)

If Hearthward is used while neglecting basic care (dirty tools, broken guest-right, cruelty in the hall), the world pushes back:

- a ward becomes brittle
- a healing leaves a lingering ache
- a sanctuary "refuses" to feel warm to you
- rumors spread that your hearth is unsafe

Hearthward is the School that punishes hypocrisy more than failure.

Hearthward and Iron

Iron is especially hateful to hearthwork because iron defines "no" at thresholds and in built structures.

Common rulings:

- iron near the hearth often imposes **Disadvantage**
- iron-inflicted wounds are harder to heal: often **–20** unless you have clean shelter and time
- healing an iron wound may succeed as a **Lesser Win** with a lingering mark (scar, sensitivity, recurring pain, fear response)

Use iron to make the setting feel sharp, not to negate Hearthward entirely.

Hearthward Techniques

Ashline Boundary (Inside-Law Perimeter)

- **Power:** 2
- **Range/Area:** Near (a small camp perimeter, one room, or a tight courtyard)
- **Duration:** 1 night
- **Description:** You pour a thin ashline and press your palm to earth; the boundary becomes socially and spiritually "real." Those who cross with hostile intent feel watched and clumsy, as if the ground dislikes their steps.
- **Modifiers:** +10 with an actual fire-source; –20 in heavy rain; Disadvantage if iron nails/iron wire are hidden along the boundary.

Ember-Ward Token (Carry the Hearth with You)

- **Power:** 1
- **Range/Area:** Touch (a small stone, coal, or charm)
- **Duration:** 1 day
- **Description:** You wrap warmth into a token; it stays faintly warm and gives the bearer a sense of

"inside" even on cold roads. It helps steady nerves and can serve as a focus for other hearthwork.

- **Effect:** commonly justifies **+10** to calm/steadiness checks or reduces penalties from cold/fear scenes (Director call).
- **Modifiers:** +10 if made at a true hearth; –20 if made while Spent or panicked.

Clean-Hand Rite (Wash the Harm Away)

- **Power:** 2
- **Range/Area:** Touch (one target + clean water/cloth)
- **Duration:** Immediate
- **Description:** You wash hands and wound edges with deliberate care; grime loosens, swelling reduces, and pain settles. This is practical healing made mythic: the body remembers safety and stops fighting itself.
- **Healing:** On a Win, reduce one injury consequence's severity or remove a minor one (Director's consequence framework).
- **Modifiers:** +10 with clean water and shelter; –20 in mud/rain; –20 if tools are filthy.

Soot-Truth (Find the Breach)

- **Power:** 1
- **Range/Area:** Near (one room/camp)
- **Duration:** 10 minutes
- **Description:** You smear soot beneath your eyes and look; breaches show as "cold spots" where warmth doesn't settle—hidden iron, rot taint, broken guest-right, or an intruder's path.
- **Modifiers:** +10 indoors; –20 outdoors in wind; +10 if the breach is recent.

Hearth-Voice Lull (Sleep in Unsafe Places)

- **Power:** 2
- **Range/Area:** Near (up to ~6 within earshot)
- **Duration:** 1 hour
- **Description:** You hum the old inside-song; the body unclenches. Even in dangerous places, people can sleep shallowly without spiraling into panic.
- **Effect:** enables meaningful rest where it otherwise wouldn't be possible; often supports Essence recovery scenes (Director call).
- **Modifiers:** +10 if people trust you; –20 if immediate pursuit is active; Disadvantage if iron bells are sounding nearby.

Borrowed Blanket Warmth (Cold Refusal)

- **Power:** 1
- **Range/Area:** Touch (cloak/blanket)
- **Duration:** 1 night
- **Description:** You breathe into cloth and fold it three times; it holds warmth far longer than it should. The wearer stops shivering, fingers remain usable, and exhaustion from cold is delayed.
- **Modifiers:** +10 if the blanket is dry; –20 if soaked; –10 in extreme storm conditions.

Hearth-Refusal Ward (No Violence Here)

- **Power:** 3
- **Range/Area:** Near (one room or tight camp)
- **Duration:** 1 scene (or up to 1 hour outside combat)
- **Description:** You feed salt to flame and speak refusal; hostility becomes harder to execute cleanly. Blades catch on scabbards, anger turns sluggish, and those who strike feel the breach as immediate shame heat.
- **Combat:** Often imposes **–10** on the first hostile action taken *inside* by attackers, or grants **Advantage** to defenders reacting (Director call).

- **Modifiers:** +10 with a real hearth/fire; –20 if the space is already in chaos; Disadvantage if iron is embedded in the structure.

Cradleward Circle (Protect the Helpless)

- **Power:** 2
- **Range/Area:** Near (a small circle around a person/object)
- **Duration:** 1 hour
- **Description:** You tie a soft cord and place it like a tiny fence; harm "misses" by inches. A fall turns into a stumble, a thrown stone glances, a sudden lunge hesitates.
- **Modifiers:** +10 if the warded target is resting or sheltered; –20 if the warded target is actively running/fighting; Disadvantage if the attacker uses iron directly within the circle.

Hearth-Hands Surge (Stand Up, Now)

- **Power:** 3
- **Range/Area:** Touch (one willing target)
- **Duration:** Immediate + 10 minutes of steadiness
- **Description:** You press both hands to chest and back and pull warmth through like bellows. A person on the edge of collapse can stand and act—eyes clearing, shaking easing, breath returning.
- **Healing/Support:** On a Win, treat as significant stabilization: reduce the immediate penalties of an injury consequence for the scene, or downgrade a severe "about to drop" state to manageable (Director call).
- **Modifiers:** +10 in shelter; –20 in battle chaos; Disadvantage if the target was iron-wounded within the last scene.

Sanctuary Claim (Make a Place "Inside" Briefly)

- **Power:** 4
- **Range/Area:** Near (one room/camp)
- **Duration:** 1 night
- **Description:** You perform a full inside-law rite—meal sharing, ashline, watch terms—compressing sanctuary into a place that isn't truly safe. For one night, it behaves like a refuge: calmer, steadier, harder to breach cleanly.
- **Modifiers:** +10 if a fire is lit and hospitality is honored; –20 if anyone within refuses the rite or is openly hostile; Disadvantage if iron is hidden in the space.

Director Guidance: Hearthward as a Campaign Stabilizer

Hearthward is the School that prevents a duet campaign from becoming "one chase forever" or "one wound ends it."

Use Hearthward to:

- justify recovery opportunities that are earned, not handed out
- give sanctuaries meaningful mechanical identity (wards, alarms, breach detection)
- create dramatic choices: *heal now* or *hold the ward*; *feed refugees* or *hide from hunters*
- turn Losses into Lesser Wins: "you survive, but the sanctuary pays"

When Hearthward succeeds at high Power, consider attaching:

- a political consequence (rival court questions your authority)
- an obligation (refugees now depend on your hearth)
- an Attention tick (a sanctuary that stays warm draws eyes)

CHAPTER 17: WELL & MIRROR

Well & Mirror is the School of the **Deep Answer**: omen, reflection, rot-sense, witness-memory, and spirit courtesy. It is not "see the future whenever you want." It is the ability to ask Éire a question in the only language it reliably speaks—**symbols, sensations, and the behavior of water and light**—and then live with the answer you are given.

A Well & Mirror worker does not command truth; they **court** it. They listen to wells. They watch reflections. They treat a stone as a witness. They pay for answers with offerings, patience, and sometimes fear.

In *The Fading*, this School is a survival tool:

- it keeps you from walking into traps you can't afford
- it reveals rot-taint before it blooms
- it uncovers false faces and false bargains
- it gives Directors a way to hand players clues without breaking mystery

But it has a cost. The Deep Answer is never just "information." The more you ask, the more you become the sort of person who notices what others cannot—and that can isolate you from both Sídhe and waking folk.

What Well & Mirror Can and Can't Do

Well & Mirror Can...

- read **omens** (yes/no, direction, "danger soon")
- sense **rot**, iron influence, and breach pressure
- expose glamour seams and identify deception cues
- consult place-witness memory (stones, wells, old boundaries)
- speak courtesy to local spirits for limited answers
- track by token and water (route impressions)

Well & Mirror Can't...

- force certainty (it offers *signals*, not guarantees)
- bind oaths/geisa (Oathcraft)
- heal bodies (Hearthward)
- fold distance (Hollow Ways)
- create disguises (Glamour)
- command animals or shapeshift (Beastpact)

This School is strongest at **thin places** and **old witnesses**: wells, fords, standing stones, boundary markers, ancient trees, tide pools. It is weakest in:

- newly built human structures
- iron-heavy spaces
- noisy, frantic battle moments
- places polluted by deliberate deception or rot saturation

The Language of Answers

Well & Mirror answers arrive in one of four forms:

1. **Taste** (salt/copper/bitter/sweet/ash)
2. **Sound** (clean ring, dull clack, swallowed silence, distant chime)
3. **Image** (ripples, shadows, brief reflection wrongness)
4. **Pull** (a bodily tug toward/away, a chill at a doorway)

Directors should keep answers:

- **useful but incomplete**
- **evocative** (sensory) rather than encyclopedic
- **actionable** (pointing toward a next step)

A strong Win can give clarity; a Lesser Win gives truth with complication; a Loss gives ambiguity, misread omens, or a costly answer that raises pressure.

Offerings and Courtesy

This School is etiquette-heavy. You are asking the world to speak.

Common offerings

- coin to water, bread crumb to well lip
- a strand of hair tied to stone
- a sip poured out (not drunk)
- a spoken gratitude (yes, it matters)

Positioning reminders

- +10 at a true witness site (well, ford, boundary stone)
- +10 with appropriate offering and quiet time
- –10 rushed or performed in chaos
- –20 in new human construction or iron-heavy rooms
- Disadvantage and/or –20 if rot-taint is actively warping the site

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Truth, Lies, and Glamour

Well & Mirror does not "turn off" Glamour. It reveals seams:

- reflections lag a fraction
- shadows don't match feet
- water ripples in response to words
- the lie tastes like copper or bitter herbs

Used well, it creates leverage: you can press, negotiate, retreat, or prepare—not simply "dispelling" every deception for free.

Backlash: The Deep Answer Looks Back

This School carries a subtle backlash: **you become noticeable to what you consult**.

Use backlash when:

- the Protagonist repeatedly scries/asks in a short span
- they demand certainty or force answers
- they probe taboo questions (true names, forbidden places, deep rot origins)
- they use spirits as tools without respect

Backlash examples

- **Dream-echo:** omens repeat in sleep, draining rest quality
- **Wet-shadow:** water clings to your hands and doesn't fully dry
- **Spirit interest:** a local presence begins following, curious or hungry
- **Answer debt:** you are "owed" an offering later
- **Attention tick:** someone hears you talking to wells and tells a priest

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Well & Mirror Techniques

Lip of the Well (Direction Omen)

- **Power:** 1
- **Range/Area:** Touch (water surface)
- **Duration:** Immediate
- **Description:** You dip two fingers and watch the first ripple; it leans toward safety or danger like a subtle compass. You don't learn *what* is there—only whether your intended direction is favored.
- **Modifiers:** +10 at an old well/ford; –20 in a stagnant puddle; –10 if you are panicked and asking repeatedly.

Copper-Taste Lie (Detect Deception Pressure)

- **Power:** 2
- **Range/Area:** Near (one speaking target)
- **Duration:** 1 scene
- **Description:** As the target speaks, lies taste like copper on your tongue and truth tastes neutral. This doesn't compel honesty, but it gives you sharp pressure points to push with questions.

- **Modifiers:** +10 if you can hear them clearly; –20 if they speak in riddles or half-truths; Disadvantage in loud crowds.

Mirror-Fleck Mark (Tag a Glamour Seam)

- **Power:** 2
- **Range/Area:** Near (one target)
- **Duration:** 1 hour
- **Description:** You flick a droplet from a reflective surface; it clings as an invisible "mirror-fleck" that makes the target's glamour more prone to slip under stress—laughter wrong, accent faltering, eyes flashing true.
- **Effect:** often justifies **Disadvantage** on the target's deception-by-glamour in key moments (Director call).
- **Modifiers:** +10 if the target is actively glamoured; –20 if not; Disadvantage if iron is present.

Stone-Heat Memory (What Happened Here?)

- **Power:** 3
- **Range/Area:** Touch (stone, boundary, old wall)
- **Duration:** Immediate impression
- **Description:** You press palm and breathe; the place gives a sensory flash of a past event—footsteps, iron stink, fear-sweat, a cry swallowed. It's not a recording; it's the emotional residue of a moment.
- **Modifiers:** +10 at ancient sites; –20 if the stone has been moved/defaced; –10 if many events overlap (busy places).

Fetch-Shadow Warning (Imminent Threat Ping)

- **Power:** 2
- **Range/Area:** Self
- **Duration:** 1 hour (one warning)
- **Description:** You invite a thin fetch-sight. Once in the hour, when real danger is about to land, you get a sharp premonitory cue—cold in the teeth, shadow doubling, a single word in your mind.
- **Modifiers:** +10 if you stay attentive; –20 if you are reckless or intoxicated; Disadvantage if rot-taint is saturating the area (omens become noisier).

Reed-Drawn Trail (Find the Recent Path)

- **Power:** 3
- **Range/Area:** Touch (bowl water + reed)
- **Duration:** 1–2 minutes
- **Description:** You swirl water with a reed and speak a name or show a token; the surface sketches a crude route impression—hedge, ford, stone, smoke—enough to choose a direction.
- **Modifiers:** +10 with a linked token (hair, cloth, personal item); –20 if days have passed; Disadvantage if iron hunters have salted/warded the trail.

Spirit-Courtesy Parley (One Question, One Favor)

- **Power:** 2
- **Range/Area:** Near (spirit site or sensed presence)
- **Duration:** Immediate
- **Description:** You offer something small and respectful, then ask one question. The answer comes in the spirit's language—wind shift, insect swarm, water ripple—clear enough to act on if interpreted carefully.
- **Modifiers:** +10 with correct offering; –20 if you've offended the place; Disadvantage if you demand too much or ask taboo questions.

Saltline Divining (Breach Detection)

- **Power:** 1
- **Range/Area:** Near (one room/camp)

- **Duration:** 10 minutes
- **Description:** You scatter a thin saltline and watch how it "breaks." Where it clumps or darkens, something is wrong: hidden iron, rot influence, hostile intent lingering.
- **Modifiers:** +10 indoors; –20 in wind/rain; +10 if the breach is fresh.

Mirror-Name Recall (Identify the True Relation)

- **Power:** 3
- **Range/Area:** Near (one person you can see + reflective surface)
- **Duration:** Immediate
- **Description:** You hold a mirror shard between you and the target and ask: *who are you to this matter?* The reflection answers with symbolism—chains for debt, smoke for deception, ivy for kinship, brine for rot.
- **Modifiers:** +10 if you ask a specific relational question; –20 if you ask broad identity questions; Disadvantage if the target refuses to be reflected or is shielded by iron.

Deep-Water Silence (Hide Your Question)

- **Power:** 2
- **Range/Area:** Self + Near (one small ritual space)
- **Duration:** 10 minutes
- **Description:** You "sink" your inquiry so it doesn't echo. Spirits and rivals are less likely to notice you asking; the air becomes still, and the water takes your words without rippling outward.
- **Modifiers:** +10 if performed in quiet; –20 if hurried; Disadvantage if the site is already watched or tainted.

Director Toolkit: Giving Clues Without Breaking Mystery

Well & Mirror is a clue engine. Use these guidelines:

- **Answer the question asked—sensory and partial.**
- **Give direction, not solutions.** "Danger at the ford," not "the killer is X."
- **On a Lesser Win, add a cost or ambiguity.** The omen is true, but time is lost, or attention rises, or the image is symbolic.
- **On a Loss, don't stonewall.** Give *something*, but make it misleading, noisy, or expensive: a spirit demands a favor, or the omen is inverted due to rot.

This keeps the campaign moving.

Well & Mirror and Clocks

This School interacts cleanly with pressure:

- a good omen can justify reducing reckless risk, not erasing it
- a scry can shift a Clock from "unknown threat" to "known threat," making choices clearer
- repeated divination can itself tick an **Attention** or **Spirit Interest** Clock

The more you ask, the more you are seen asking.

CHAPTER 18: BEASTPACT

Beastpact is the School of the **Wild Accord**: the old agreement between the Sídhe and the living shapes of Éire. It is not "beast magic" in the wizard sense. It is **courtesy**, **pact**, and **shared breath**—a way of borrowing the body and senses of the island's creatures without claiming ownership over them.

A Beastpact worker does not command animals like tools. They treat them like neighbors, rivals, and kin. They speak in whistles and posture. They offer crumbs, water, and respect. They accept that the wild remembers favors and slights.

This School is the proper home of **shapechange** in *The Fading*, and it is also one of the best Schools for duet play: stealth, travel, scouting, pursuit-breaking, and survival all become richer when you can become a hare under bracken or a crow over a hedge.

But Beastpact has a cost. The more often you borrow the wild, the more the wild borrows *you*: your habits shift, your appetite changes, your fear responses become animal-quick, and your human (or courtly) patience thins.

What Beastpact Can and Can't Do

Beastpact Can...

- grant **borrowed senses** (hearing, smell, night-seeing, vibration sense)
- allow **animal communication** (simple meaning, mood, warning)
- enable **partial transformation** (fur, eyes, padded feet, gills-like breath tricks)
- enable **full shapechange** into a pact-form animal
- lend animal movement (leaps, climbing, swimming, long bounds)
- calm animals, call them, or request small favors (never absolute control)
- share senses with a companion briefly (thin "pack link")

Beastpact Can't...

- bind oaths or enforce bargains (Oathcraft)
- fold distance through thresholds (Hollow Ways)
- provide true prophecy (Well & Mirror)
- heal injuries directly (Hearthward)
- rewrite attention/memory reliably (Glamour)

Beastpact is strongest where wild life is present: moor, wood, coast, field-edge, bog, ruin. It is weakest in:

- dense human stone and ironwork
- tight interiors (especially for large forms)
- places where animals have been slaughtered recently (fear-laden ground)
- sanctuaries where the inside-law demands quiet restraint

Pact Forms (Your "Borrowed Body")

When you choose Beastpact as your School, you should decide (with the Director) what kinds of forms you are culturally and personally aligned with. You don't need a long list; you need a **pact theme**.

Common pact themes in Éire

- **Hare & Fox:** stealth, misdirection, quick escape
- **Hound & Wolf:** pursuit, protection, pack-sense
- **Crow & Owl:** scouting, messages, night watch
- **Deer & Horse:** speed, long travel, leaping terrain
- **Seal & Otter:** coast travel, cold water survival
- **Boar:** stubborn force, fearlessness, bramble-charge

Your pact theme guides what "Full Shape" forms make sense for you. You are not a zoo. You are a person with an agreement.

The Shapechange Rule (How It Works at the Table)

Shapechange in *The Fading* is a **scene tool**, not a new character sheet.

Full Shape (Baseline)

- You attempt **Full Shape** as a Beastpact working (usually **Power 3**).
- You become one animal form aligned with your pact theme.
- Your gear does not become "free equipment" in beast form. Choose one consistent table approach:
    - **Left Behind:** gear remains where you changed (common and clean)
    - **Token-Carried:** you may keep one small token (ring, cord, charm)
    - **Director Call:** special artifacts may carry through if designed to

What You Keep

You keep:

- your intent, memory, and goals
- your personality (though instincts tug)
- the ability to end the form voluntarily (usually as a Main action or at scene end, Director call)

You do not keep:

- speech in human tongues
- hand-based tool use
- most social credibility in mortal spaces

Combat in Beast Form

Beast form is not meant to out-damage weapons. If you attack:

- bites/claws/gore are typically **Light** weapon harm unless the Director rules the form is especially dangerous (boar/large wolf might reach Standard in the right moment).
- the real advantage is **positioning**: reach places, escape grapples, slip nets, scout, and ambush.

Instinct Pressure (Roleplay + Consequence Handle)

Beastpact is about borrowing animal nature. That nature pushes back.

When Beastpact is used repeatedly, under stress, or at high Power, Directors may:

- introduce **instinct pulls** (urge to flee, chase, hide, hoard food, howl)
- offer the player a choice: accept the pull for a benefit, or resist and take a minor consequence (fatigue, agitation, shame)

This is not a separate mechanic—just consequence framing consistent with One-on-One.

Beastpact and Iron

Iron does not merely hurt Sídhe—it offends the wild agreement. Iron traps, chains, nails, and bells "shout" refusal.

Common rulings:

- Disadvantage for Beastpact workings in iron-heavy areas
- Full Shape may be impossible in a tight iron-saturated space (Director call)
- If you are injured by iron while in beast form, the shock may force you out of form or cause a harsh consequence (panic-surge, instinct break)

Beastpact Tells and Backlash

Beastpact is noticeable in a different way than Glamour.

Common Tells

- eyes reflect like an animal's for a heartbeat
- breath becomes louder, more rhythmic
- a faint scent of fur, brine, or leaf-musk
- nearby animals react (silence, agitation, curious approach)

Backlash (When the Wild Is Used Rudely)

- animals avoid you for a time
- your appetite becomes difficult (raw cravings, restlessness)
- your "human face" feels unfamiliar after shifting
- a local spirit of the wild demands an offering or favor

Beastpact Techniques

Bracken-Step Pads (Silent Feet)

- **Power:** 1
- **Range/Area:** Self
- **Duration:** 10 minutes
- **Description:** The skin of your soles toughens and softens at once—padded like a fox, sure like a hare. Twigs snap less, stones roll quieter, and your weight distributes more kindly.
- **Modifiers:** +10 in woods/brush; –20 on loud gravel or metal; –10 if sprinting.

Night-Eye Borrowing (Owl's Glint)

- **Power:** 1
- **Range/Area:** Self
- **Duration:** 10 minutes
- **Description:** Your pupils widen and your vision drinks dim light. Shapes separate cleanly—hedge gaps, distant movement, the pale shine of water—without needing a torch.
- **Modifiers:** +10 at dusk/night; –20 in bright glare (can be uncomfortable); Disadvantage if you've been flash-blinded by sudden firelight.

Whistle-Speech (Simple Animal Parley)

- **Power:** 1
- **Range/Area:** Near (local animals within earshot)
- **Duration:** Immediate exchange
- **Description:** You whistle a few old syllables and posture your intent. Animals answer with mood and meaning: *danger*, *food*, *strangers*, *dogs*, *iron smell*, *safe hollow*.
- **Modifiers:** +10 with a small offering; –20 if the animals are terrified or being hunted.

Houndline Track (Follow by Scent-Thread)

- **Power:** 2
- **Range/Area:** Self
- **Duration:** 1 hour
- **Description:** You taste the air and find a scent-thread to follow. It's not perfect certainty, but it turns chaos into direction—especially in damp ground where the island holds smell.
- **Modifiers:** +10 with a linked token; –20 in heavy rain or over water; Disadvantage if iron hunters have salted the route.

Crow-High Lift (Brief Carry)

- **Power:** 3
- **Range/Area:** Touch (one willing small companion or light bundle)
- **Duration:** 1 minute
- **Description:** You borrow the crow's "up" and become light enough to lift with a running jump—clearing a wall, a ditch, or a hedge top with a companion clinging to you. It feels like flight but behaves like a single impossible bound.
- **Modifiers:** +10 in open space; –20 in tight interiors; –20 if the companion panics or clutches wrongly.

Borrowed Hide (Thick Fur / Tough Skin)

- **Power:** 2

- **Range/Area:** Self
- **Duration:** 1 scene
- **Description:** Fur rises along arms and neck, or skin thickens like boar-hide. Blows still hurt, but they land duller; cold bites less; thorns catch less deep.
- **Combat:** Often justifies reducing minor harm or granting better positioning against environmental hazards (Director call; not true armor immunity).
- **Modifiers:** +10 in cold/wet environments; –20 if you are already iron-wounded; Disadvantage near heavy iron.

Antler-Leap (Deer's Crossing)

- **Power:** 2
- **Range/Area:** Self
- **Duration:** 10 minutes
- **Description:** Your legs remember deer spring. You can clear bog gaps, stone walls, and uneven ground in long, graceful bounds without losing breath as quickly.
- **Modifiers:** +10 in open terrain; –20 in cramped spaces; –10 if burdened with heavy gear.

Hare-Heart Bolt (Panic Escape Surge)

- **Power:** 2
- **Range/Area:** Self
- **Duration:** A few breaths (one decisive escape moment)
- **Description:** Your fear becomes useful: a sudden burst of speed, a zigzag that breaks aim, a body that slips through a gap it shouldn't. This is not sustained travel—just the moment that prevents capture.
- **Modifiers:** +10 when escaping immediate grasp; –20 if you're trying to use it offensively; Disadvantage if the ground is slick with ice or you're badly injured.

Full Shape: Second Skin (Quicker Shift)

- **Power:** 3
- **Range/Area:** Self
- **Duration:** 1 scene (or 1 hour outside combat)
- **Description:** This is a refined Full Shape technique: the change is smoother and less disruptive. You slip into your pact form with fewer tells, keeping one small token on you (ring/cord/charm) as an anchor.
- **Modifiers:** +10 if you have your totem/token; –20 if you're panicked; Disadvantage in iron-saturated spaces.

Pack-Link Howl (Share One Urge)

- **Power:** 2
- **Range/Area:** Near (up to 3 willing allies close)
- **Duration:** 10 minutes
- **Description:** You share a thin pack rhythm—breath syncing, attention tightening, fear turning into coordinated motion. Allies don't become animals, but they move like a group that trusts its instincts.
- **Effect:** Often justifies **+10** to coordinated stealth, pursuit, or ambush prevention for the group (Director call).
- **Modifiers:** +10 if allies trust you; –20 if there's internal conflict; Disadvantage in crowded human settlements where the pack rhythm feels "wrong."

Director Toolkit: Running Beast Form Without a Subgame

Keep beast form fast by focusing on **what it enables**, not stat blocks.

Ask:

- What does this form let you access (holes, roofs, water, thickets)?

- What does it make harder (speech, tools, social credibility)?
- What instinct pressure makes the scene more dramatic (chase, hide, hunt, flee)?

Use consequences for hard edges:

- nets snag, iron burns, dogs scent you, crows gossip, hunger spikes after shifting

Beastpact should feel like a gift with teeth, not a free upgrade.

Beastpact and Campaign Tone

Beastpact is one of the purest expressions of *The Fading's* theme: the Sídhe becoming closer to the old island even as the waking world hardens.

Used well, it creates:

- moving scout scenes
- mythic escapes
- eerie meetings with animal-eyed Sídhe
- hard choices: remain beast-longer and lose human patience, or return and face the hall

Arthur Rackham · Oct 09

CHAPTER 19: MAGICK IN CONFLICT

Conflict in *The Fading* is not only blades and blood. It is **attention**, **breach**, **pursuit**, **panic**, **politics**, and the constant pressure of a world that is slowly becoming less willing to tolerate the Sídhe. Magick belongs in conflict—but it must belong in the same rules language as everything else: One-on-One's resolution, consequences, Destiny, and pacing tools.

This chapter is a working guide: how to use magick cleanly in fights, chases, negotiations, and tense scenes without creating a second rules engine.

The One Rule That Never Changes

Every working in conflict follows the same core structure:

1. **Declare intent** (what you want, in one sentence).
2. **Choose the working** (General Magick or your School).
3. Pay **Essence = Power** (attempt cost, success or failure).
4. Roll **Sídhe Magick (INT)**: d100 vs your **modified skill value**.
5. Apply **Win / Lesser Win / Loss** and frame consequences.

There are **no target numbers**. The "target" is always the **modified skill value** after situational modifiers and Advantage/Disadvantage.

Conflict Casting: What Counts as "Allowed"

A) "One Main Action" Still Applies

Casting is almost always a **Main action**. In conflict, this matters:

- you can't do everything at once
- magick competes with striking, running, guarding, aiming, and helping

If a player wants to "cast while doing something else," that is usually:

- a **Lesser Win** effect at best, or
- a **penalty / Disadvantage** for doing two decisive things at once

You Still Need Form

Conflict does not remove form requirements. It *changes* them:

- proper tokens are harder to use while running
- words are harder to speak while choking on fear
- witnesses are harder to secure in chaos

This is where Directors apply the most consistent conflict modifiers:

- **−10** rushed / under pressure
- **−20** panicked / wounded / tackled / shouting over noise
- **Disadvantage** when iron saturation is active or when a target is trained and prepared

How Magick "Deals Damage" (When It Does)

Magick that harms does so like a weapon—quick, readable, and not a separate math system.

Use Weapon-Like Harm

If a working lists damage, it will list it as:

- **Light**, **Standard**, or **Heavy**

It will also list:

- **Range** (Touch / Near / Short / Far / Sight)
- and any special rider effect (stumble, drop item, hesitation)

Principle: Most Sídhe magick in conflict is *disruptive* rather than lethal. The island's craft favors **openings**.

The Three Conflict Jobs Magick Does Best

When adjudicating, ask what job the working is doing. Most conflict magick is one of these:

Job 1: Create an Opening

Examples:

- Breath-Steal, Cord-Snare Shadow, Moth-Lure, Far-Near Twist, Pause of Courtesy
  Adjudication: On a Win, grant a concrete opening—position shift, Advantage to follow-up, enemy Disadvantage, broken rhythm.

Job 2: Change the Battlefield

Examples:

- Ash-Quiet, Mist-Veil, Threshold Refusal, Kindleward Circle, Hedge-Thread Gate
  Adjudication: On a Win, the scene changes: sightlines, access points, pursuit routes, who can move where.

Job 3: Control Pressure (Without Erasing It)

Examples:

- Road-Forget, Hearth-Alarm, Well-Listen, Fetch-Shadow Warning
  Adjudication: On a Win, pressure becomes informed and manageable—Clocks shift, threats become legible, but stakes remain.

Opposed Casting and "Active Resistance"

Most foes do not roll to resist every working; they resist through positioning and narrative truth. But in conflict, active resistance matters when:

- the target is aware and bracing
- the working is directly coercive (geis, truth-price, fear-glare, unmasking, breath-steal)
- the target is a significant antagonist (named rival, oath-keeper, iron-hunter captain, court agent)

How to Run Active Resistance

Treat it as a contest:

- **Caster:** Sídhe Magick (INT)
- **Target:** roll the most relevant skill (often END, AWR, PRE, or INT-linked lore/countercraft)
- Compare outcomes using the same Win/Lesser/Loss logic.

Examples of resistance picks

- **END**: push through pain, breath catch, panic spike
- **AWR**: catch the hook, see the misdirection, resist suggestion
- **PRE**: refuse fear, hold command presence, keep speech steady
- **INT (Lore/Tokencraft)**: counter-form, recognize terms, break token leverage
- **GRC/MGT (movement skills)**: slip snares, avoid the moment the working "takes"

Key point: even successful resistance should often cost something—time, position, a tell, a Clock tick—so the contest stays dramatic.

Win / Lesser Win / Loss in Magick Conflict

Use these as your adjudication spine.

On a Win

- The working functions as described.
- If it's a conflict opener, it creates a clean opening.
- If it's environmental control, it changes the field clearly.
- If it's information, it provides actionable clarity.

On a Lesser Win

Magick still works—but one or more of these applies:

- **Reduced scope** (fewer targets, smaller area)
- **Reduced duration** (ends sooner than hoped)
- **Added tell** (someone notices; evidence remains)
- **Cost spike** (fatigue consequence, drained composure)
- **Trade-off** (you succeed, but you lose position/time)

This is the most common "conflict magick" outcome because it keeps pressure alive.

On a Loss

Avoid "nothing happens." Instead choose a meaningful failure:

- it fizzles and **invites consequence** (noise, tell, backlash)
- it works wrongly (wrong exit, misread omen, binds the wrong detail)
- it works but at a cost you didn't anticipate (Clock ticks, attention spike)
- it triggers **iron bite** (pain consequence) if iron is present

Conflict is supposed to move. Even failure moves it.

Tells: The Conflict Price of Being Sídhe

In *The Fading*, magick in conflict often leaves **evidence**, and evidence becomes **threat**.

Directors should consider leaving:

- lingering mist, ash patterns, a cracked mirror, a warm token
- witness testimony ("I saw him step through the hedge")
- animal reaction (crows gathering, dogs whining, horses refusing a gate)

Tells are excellent fuel for:

- **Attention Clocks**
- rival court entanglements
- human hunter escalation
- spirit curiosity

Magick and Clocks (Conflict Pacing)

This module expects the Director to use One-on-One's pacing tools—especially **Clocks**—to keep conflict tense without requiring constant combat.

Typical Conflict Clocks for Éire

- **Attention** (humans notice, rumors spread, hunters converge)
- **Pursuit** (how close the net is)
- **Sanctuary Breach** (your refuge is compromised)
- **Oath Pressure** (terms tightening, sanctions nearing)
- **Rot Bloom** (taint becoming undeniable)
- **Rival Court Interest** (political entanglement rising)

How Magick Interacts With Clocks

- **Openers** (Breath-Steal, Moth-Lure) often buy time: *delay a tick* or change who has initiative.

- **Battlefield changes** (Mist-Veil, Threshold Refusal) often *reduce immediate danger* but raise Attention later.
- **Information** (Fetch-Shadow, Well-Listen) often converts unknown pressure into known pressure, helping choices.

Rule of thumb:
Magick rarely erases a Clock. It usually **shifts** it, **delays** it, or **moves it sideways**.

Adjudication by Conflict Type (Fast Guides)

A) Combat Scenes

Use magick to: create openings, disrupt rhythm, protect a vulnerable ally, enforce guest-right, or expose deception.
Director guidance:

- If a working clearly changes advantage, grant **Advantage/Disadvantage** to the next relevant roll (or apply a situational ±10/±20).
- If a working restrains/stumbles, treat it as a positional condition that lasts **a few breaths** unless reinforced by fiction.
- Don't let repeated Power 3+ castings be "free": apply Essence pressure and tells.

B) Chases and Pursuit

Use magick to: break line of sight, fold a short distance, erase track clarity, bar a threshold briefly.
Director guidance:

- Every chase should be tied to a **Pursuit Clock** or similar.
- A Win usually buys a meaningful advantage (reduce pursuit pressure, gain terrain lead).
- A Lesser Win usually succeeds but advances **Attention** or burns the route.
- A Loss often produces a wrong exit or time slip rather than a dead stop.

C) Negotiation Under Threat

Use magick to: sharpen bargains, enforce courtesy, reveal deception, pause violence.
Director guidance:

- Oathcraft and Glamour are potent here; apply witness and credibility modifiers.
- Treat social magick outcomes as creating **social position**: a concession, a hesitation, a forced clarity moment—not total compliance.

D) Stealth and Infiltration

Use magick to: become background, dim light, hush sound, miscount, open latches, veil routes.
Director guidance:

- Stealth magick works best as *opening creation*.
- On a Lesser Win, it works but leaves a tell (a guard gets a weird feeling; dogs bark later; a mirror cracks).

The "Iron Problem" in Conflict (How to Keep It Fair)

Iron should matter without turning magick off.

Common fair applications

- apply **Disadvantage** in iron-saturated areas (forge, bell tower, iron-banded gatehouse)
- apply **–20** when touching iron directly or casting across iron bars
- allow magick to work as a **Lesser Win** with backlash (pain consequence, tell, attention spike)

Iron becomes interesting when it forces choices:

- "Do we avoid the gatehouse or risk a harsh cast?"
- "Do we lure them away from iron before we bind terms?"
- "Do we heal now in poor conditions or retreat to a hearth?"

A Quick "Conflict Casting Checklist"

Before you roll, answer:

1. What is my **intent**?
2. What is my **working**?
3. What's the **Power** (and Essence cost)?
4. What **form** am I using (token/phrase/offering)?
5. What's the **risk** if I get a Lesser Win or Loss (tell, Clock tick, backlash)?

This keeps casting fast and dramatic.

CHAPTER 20: MAGICK ITEMS & ENCHANTED TOKENS

Sídhe magick is not only spoken. It is **worn**, **knotted**, **carried**, **heated**, **mirrored**, and **offered**. A token is a handle on reality: a small thing that gives your working something to "catch" on. In the old days, courts maintained vaults of such handles—kept safe from iron and the prying hands of the waking world. In the age of Fading, many tokens have been scattered, traded, buried, or stolen.

This chapter does not create a separate item system. It teaches a simple principle:

> **An enchanted item is either (1) a bonus to your roll, (2) a change to your Power/Effort, or (3) a permission that reshapes what's plausible.**

How Enchanted Items Work in Play

A) Common Mechanical Benefits

Most Sídhe tokens do one or more of these:

- **+10 to Sídhe Magick (INT)** rolls when used as a focus (or +10 to a specific School)
- **+1 Power** to a working (and therefore **+1 Essence cost** as normal)
- **Reduce Essence cost by 1** (minimum cost 1) for a narrow category of workings
- grant **Advantage** when the fiction supports it (proper form, proper witness, proper tool)
- allow a **Lesser Win** to be treated as cleaner (reduced tell, reduced complication)
- function as a **witness token** (especially for Oathcraft and Hearthward)

B) Limits and Integrity

To keep compatibility and tone:

- An item never grants a *new School.*
- An item never makes magick "free." Even when it reduces cost, casting still costs Essence.
- An item never deletes consequences; it may **shift** them (tell becomes smaller, backlash becomes a debt, etc.).
- Iron still matters. Iron near the item may impose Disadvantage or cause the item to "go cold."

C) Using Items in Conflict

In tense scenes, using the item is usually part of the same Main action as casting—unless the Director rules the item requires a separate moment (unwrapping a complex cord, setting a ward-stone properly, etc.). If rushed, apply:

- **–10** if you fumble with the token in motion
- **–20** if you are wrestling, bleeding heavily, or being actively grappled

Categories of Tokens

Sídhe items tend to fall into a few folk categories:

- **Focus Tokens:** improve casting reliability (+10 or Advantage)
- **Witness Tokens:** make terms "real" (Oathcraft) or make refuge "inside" (Hearthward)

- **Route Tokens:** tie to thresholds and folds (Hollow Ways)
- **Reflection Tokens:** reveal truth, cut glamour seams (Well & Mirror)
- **Pact Tokens:** anchor animal accord (Beastpact)
- **Court Relics (Artifacts):** unique items with history, obligations, and story gravity

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"Common" Enchanted Token Types (General Examples)

These are the kinds of tokens Sídhe carry day-to-day, traded between sanctuaries, or inherited in small cloth bundles. Each entry includes quick mechanics; individual tokens can be reskinned.

Ash-Smooth Ward Pebble

- **Description:** A river stone darkened in hearth ash, warm to the touch.
- **Mechanics:** When used as focus for **Hearthward**, gain +**10** to Sídhe Magick for that working. If the casting is a **Lesser Win**, you may reduce the tell (e.g., smell of smoke, ember glow) to something subtler.

Knotcord of Clear Terms

- **Description:** A cord with three standard knots taught in fading courts.
- **Mechanics:** When used in **Oathcraft** negotiations, grants **Advantage** *if* both parties touch the cord during the bargain. If either party refuses contact, no benefit.

Mirror-Shard in Cloth

- **Description:** A sliver of polished mirror wrapped in grey cloth to keep it from "seeing too much."
- **Mechanics:** +**10** to **Well & Mirror** workings that expose deception or glamour seams. On a Loss, the shard may hairline-crack (no mechanical penalty, but it becomes a tell).

Hedge-Thorn Charm

- **Description:** A single thorn wrapped in thread, carried in a little leather fold.
- **Mechanics:** +**10** to **Hollow Ways** workings involving hedges/brush thresholds. If iron is within arm's reach, the charm "goes cold" and provides no benefit.

Brine-Bead (Coast Stone)

- **Description:** A pale bead carved from coastal stone and salted monthly.
- **Mechanics:** Reduce Essence cost by **1** (minimum 1) for **Beastpact** water/coast movement workings (seal-skin slip, cold-water passage, etc.).

Ribbon of Soft Notice

- **Description:** A narrow ribbon dyed in plant tones that never quite matches any single color.
- **Mechanics:** When used as a Glamour focus, gain +**10** on workings that reduce attention (blend, miscount, dim presence). If you use it in bright noon under scrutiny, apply −**10** (the ribbon feels "too deliberate").

Coal-Heart Token

- **Description:** A black coal fragment sealed in wax; it smells faintly of bread.
- **Mechanics:** Once per session, you may treat a **Hearthward** Win as exceptionally steady: the Director should frame fewer immediate complications, though longer-term consequences may still apply.

Ford-Coin of Passage

- **Description:** An old coin with a hole punched through, worn on cord.
- **Mechanics:** +**10** to ford-crossing and water-permission Hollow Ways workings *if* you offer the coin to the water afterward (it may be recovered later if the Director allows).

Sídhe Comb of Poise

- **Description:** A small comb carved from bone or dark wood; teeth are never broken.

- **Mechanics:** When used before a scene, grants **Advantage** to the first **Glamour** working in that scene that involves seeming/face/voice. Using it mid-fight usually imposes **−10** (awkward).

Ring of Quiet Courtesy

- **Description:** A plain ring with a tiny etched spiral inside.
- **Mechanics:** When the ring is worn and openly shown, **Oathcraft** "Pause of Courtesy" and guest-right workings gain **+10** if the scene plausibly respects hospitality norms. It does nothing in pure brutality.

Artifacts of The Fading

Artifacts are not just "better tokens." They are **story-weight**: remembered names, obligations, jealousies, and consequences. Each Artifact provides explicit mechanics and a pressure hook the Director can use.

> **Artifact Use Rule:** An Artifact's bonus applies only when the Protagonist uses it with correct form and context. If used greedily or without courtesy, treat success as a **Lesser Win** at best, and consider backlash or a debt.

Torc of the Sun-Lit Oath

Description: A gold torc that seems to hold warm light even in shade. The metal is not iron; it's old courtwork, etched with spiral knots that look different depending on who stares at them.
History: Said to have been worn at high councils where the Tuatha Dé Danann set terms that held for generations. It passed from hall to hall as a "truth anchor" during feuds.
Mechanics:

- While worn, you gain **+1 Power** to **Oathcraft** workings (and pay the +1 Essence cost as normal).
- In addition, once per scene you may treat an **Oathcraft Lesser Win** as "cleaner": the bargain holds without an immediate tell (the cost shifts to a longer-term obligation or Attention tick at the Director's discretion).
  Pressure Hook: The torc dislikes petty binding. If you attempt unjust terms, the Director may impose **Disadvantage** or cause the torc to warm painfully (minor consequence).

Mirror of Loughglass

Description: A hand-mirror with a dark, lake-like surface. It never reflects the sky; it reflects *beneath* the sky—cloud bottoms, bird shadows, the underside of faces.
History: Kept by a refuge-keeper who served as a quiet judge between rival courts. The mirror is rumored to show what a lie "costs," not just that it is a lie.
Mechanics:

- **+10** to **Well & Mirror** workings that expose deception or glamour seams.
- Once per session, when you consult the mirror for a direct question, you may force the answer to be **actionably clear** (Director must provide a strong clue), but the mirror demands a price: mark a **Debt to the Deep** narrative obligation (owed offering/favor) or advance a relevant **Clock** by 1.
  Pressure Hook: The mirror draws attention from spirits of water and boundary. Repeated use in short time often advances a Spirit Interest Clock.

Hearthstone of Brigid's Ember

Description: A palm-sized white stone with a faint ember glow in its veins. When held, it smells like clean linen and bread crust.
History: A sanctuary relic carried from a lost hall. Some whisper it was blessed in the old manner when the People still held full feasts and not ration-meals.
Mechanics:

- **+10** to **Hearthward** workings used to protect a space (wards, alarms, refusal).
- Once per session, you may reduce Essence cost by **1** (minimum 1) for a **Hearthward healing** working performed in shelter with clean supplies.
- If you roll a **Loss** on a healing working, the Hearthstone prevents the worst: treat it as a **Lesser**

Win with a complication (pain mark, lingering ache, or an owed favor to the sanctuary).
Pressure Hook: The Hearthstone demands hospitality. If you deny refuge cruelly while carrying it, it goes cold until amends are made.

Cord of the Nine Knots

Description: A dark cord with nine knots; each knot feels different—warm, cold, slick, rough—depending on who touches it.
History: An oath-keeper's tool used to bind truce terms during the first waves of human expansion. It is famous for preventing "clever wording" from becoming betrayal.
Mechanics:

- When both parties touch the cord, **Oathcraft** bargain workings gain **Advantage**.
- Once per scene, you may **name** a single hidden clause or intentional omission; the Director must reveal whether such a clause exists (not necessarily its full details) as part of the scene framing.
  Pressure Hook: The cord is jealous of lies. If you try to use it while concealing your own crucial term, treat your outcome as a Lesser Win with a tell.

Hedge-Key of the Green Road

Description: A key-shaped charm carved from dark wood and wrapped in living green thread that never wilts. It makes no sound when dropped.
History: Passed among Hollow Ways practitioners who served as couriers between sanctuaries. It is said to "remember" three routes at a time.
Mechanics:

- +**10** to **Hollow Ways** workings involving hedges, brush-gates, and short folds.
- Once per session, you may declare that you have a **remembered route** between two thin places you have personally visited before; your next fold along that route treats bright noon penalties as one step less severe (e.g., –20 becomes –10).
  Pressure Hook: Using the Hedge-Key near iron risks route burn. On a Loss in iron-heavy areas, the route becomes unreliable and may later betray you.

Seal-Skin Mantle of Inis Brine

Description: A cloak lined with pale, slick hide. It always feels slightly damp, never cold.
History: A coastal court relic, traded for safe passage and used to evacuate Sídhe during raids. It is associated with vanished sea-halls and drowned songs.
Mechanics:

- +**10** to **Beastpact** water/coast workings.
- Once per session, you may treat cold water as "inside-safe" for one short travel segment: the Director should reduce environmental consequence severity from exposure, though the journey may still draw attention.
  Pressure Hook: The mantle attracts sea-interest. Spirits, seals, or coastal hunters may take notice after repeated use.

Comb of the Uncounted

Description: A bone comb with etched tally marks that never add up the same way twice.
History: A Glamour relic used to escort nobles through hostile towns. It is rumored to have saved a court heir from iron-hunters by making an entire patrol miscount.
Mechanics:

- When used as part of casting, +**10** to **Glamour** workings that reduce attention, miscount, or unremember a detail.
- Once per scene, you may upgrade the *quality* of a Glamour outcome: if you get a **Lesser Win**, the Director should treat it as "nearly clean" (shorter duration or smaller scope still applies, but the tell is minimized).
  Pressure Hook: The comb hates mirrors. If used near reflective glass/metal under scrutiny, it may create a tell (hairline cracks, wrong reflection) even on a Win.

Stone of the Returning Step

Description: A smooth grey stone with a spiral carved so deeply it catches dirt and never fully cleans.

History: Said to have been carried by a messenger who survived ambush after ambush—always "one wrong turn" away from death.
Mechanics:

- +**10** to **Hollow Ways** "backstep/correction" style workings (undo wrong door, return to fork, rethread last step).
- Once per session, when you would suffer a catastrophic wrong-exit consequence from a travel working, you may instead return to the last safe threshold you crossed (still costs time/pressure: advance a relevant Clock by 1).
  Pressure Hook: The stone collects debt. Each time it saves you, the Between notices you more strongly (Spirit Interest or Attention pressure rises).

Cup of Guest-Right (The Warm Rim)

Description: A small cup that feels warm at the rim when someone enters with honest intent. It cools when intent is hostile.
History: Kept by a hall that served as neutral ground between rival lineages. The cup's reputation is enough to halt a brawl—sometimes.
Mechanics:

- When the cup is shared in a space, **Hearthward** and **Oathcraft** hospitality workings gain +**10**.
- Once per session, you may attempt **Pause of Courtesy** (or a similar guest-right binding) as a reaction-like interruption within the fiction—still your Main action for the moment, but it can cut in "just in time" if the Director agrees the cup is actively in use.
  Pressure Hook: If you violate guest-right while the cup is present, it goes cold and may impose Disadvantage on your next Oathcraft attempt until amends.

Cloakpin of the Quiet Court

Description: A silver cloakpin shaped like a closed eye. It is always clean, as if grime refuses to cling.
History: A relic of a court that specialized in hiding sanctuaries in plain sight. Some say the pin was once worn by a Tuatha-born envoy who crossed human halls unseen, not by invisibility but by perfect "unimportance."
Mechanics:

- +**10** to **Glamour** workings that create "background presence" (blend, miscount, dim notice).
- Once per session, after a successful Glamour working, you may declare one small identifying detail is **not recorded** by casual witnesses (the hook slips): treat as a built-in minimized tell unless the scene involves written record or strong scrutiny.
  Pressure Hook: The pin does not like boasting. If you draw attention to yourself intentionally while relying on it, the Director may advance Attention or introduce a witness complication.

Director Notes: Handing Out Items Without Breaking Tone

Enchanted tokens are a great reward in *The Fading* because they:

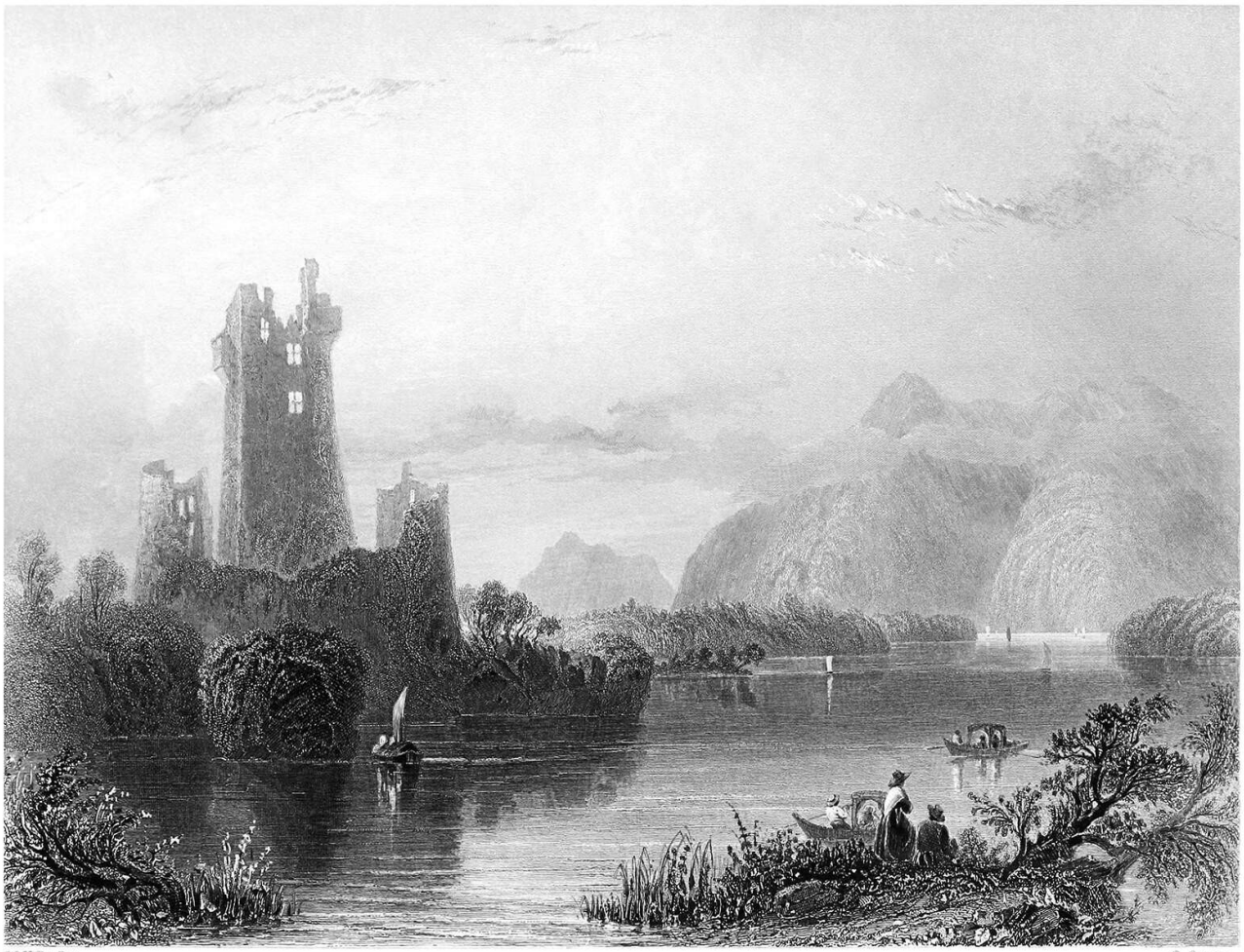
- feel culturally grounded (cords, stones, combs, cups)
- reinforce correct form (witness, courtesy, offering)
- give small numeric boosts that stay within One-on-One's simple modifier language

Recommended pacing

- Common tokens: frequent, tradable, sometimes consumable or "go cold."
- Artifacts: rare, story-loaded, always tied to obligations, rivals, or sanctuaries.

Common Artifact complications (choose one when it appears)

- a rival court claims it
- an oath is attached to it
- it draws spirit attention
- it is known by human hunters (they recognize it)
- it refuses unjust use



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CHAPTER 21: EQUIPMENT OF ÉIRE

The People are fading, not helpless. Sídhe gear is made for **quiet roads**, **wet ground**, **long hunger**, and the hard truth that iron is common in the waking world. Where humans favor mass and sharp display, the Sídhe favor **stability**, **portability**, **courtesy**, and **tokens that carry meaning**. A cloak is not just warmth—it is a boundary. A cord is not just cord—it is witness. A knife is not only a blade—it is a promise kept close.

This chapter presents equipment in the same stat-line manner as the core One-on-One RPG book, with added Éire flavor. Mechanically, items remain simple: tags, damage (where relevant), and a few consistent, easy rulings.

UNIVERSAL ITEM STAT LINES (ONE-on-ONE STANDARD)

Weapon Line

Name — **Skill**, Tags, **Damage**, **Range**, Traits

- **Damage:** Roll the listed dice on a hit; apply Armor/DR as your core rules specify.
- **Range Bands (suggested): Reach** (touch), **Close** (room), **Near** (street), **Far** (field), **Extreme** (sniper/ship).
- **Traits:** Short keywords to trigger Advantage/Disadvantage and special rulings.

Armor Line

Name — Tags, **DR**, **Penalties**, Traits

- **DR (Damage Reduction):** Subtract from incoming damage (or convert to wound mitigation per your Wound rules).
- **Penalties:** Commonly to Stealth/Agility tests in heavy gear.

Gear Line

Name — Tags, **Uses**, Traits

- **Uses** can be literal charges (torches, medkits) or narrative supplies (rope).

Director Tip (Speed): Don't over-stat everything. If the fiction doesn't care, assign Standard gear and move on. Reserve "special" stat lines for gear that changes choices. **Common Misuse:** If a character lacks the right [Specialist] skill, don't let gear become a loophole. A lockpick set doesn't grant Lockpicking; a starship console doesn't grant Piloting: Spacecraft. **Great With:** Gear is a clean way to express Advantage/Disadvantage. Good optics = +10, improvised tools = −10, unstable prototype = +20 with a complication on doubles (Director's call).

MATERIALS OF ÉIRE

Gear in this setting is shaped by materials—and materials matter.

- **Bronze & Bone:** common Sídhe preference when possible. Bronze holds edges, bone holds shape, neither offends the People the way iron does.
- **Stone & Wood:** still widely used, especially among Fir Bolg and rural Gaels.
- **Iron:** everywhere in human settlements (nails, bands, buckles, tools). Sídhe avoid wearing iron when they can; when they must, it's treated like handling poison—carefully, briefly, with consequence.

Director guidance: If an item is explicitly iron-bearing and the user is Sídhe, it may introduce discomfort, tells, or Disadvantage in certain magick scenes (per your shared Sídhe vulnerabilities). Don't punish "every buckle"—focus on meaningful iron: blades, bars, bands, nails pressed into thresholds.

WEAPONS OF ÉIRE (SÍDHE, GAEL, FIR BOLG, FOMORIAN)

Blades

Sídhe Knife — Blades, [Melee, Light, Non-Iron, Sídhe-Made], 1d4, Reach, Concealable; Off-Hand; Quiet

A Sídhe knife is often bronze or dark river-stone flaked and resin-set, carried more like a personal token than a "weapon." Many are etched with tiny spiral marks or wrapped in cord that once belonged to someone important. In conflict it is quick and intimate—meant for last-ditch survival, cutting bindings, or making a threat credible without starting a war. Among the People, drawing it in a hall is a social act as much as a tactical one.

Dagger — Blades, [Melee, Light], 1d4, Reach, Concealable; Off-Hand

Human-made daggers are common along the waking roads —cheap iron, easy to hide, easy to lose. Sídhe who carry them often wrap the hilt in cloth or cord to "soften" the feel, and they keep them out of direct contact with skin. In Éire, a dagger is less a dueling weapon than a tool of fear: for cutting rope, prying small latches, or making a bandit hesitate. If you take one from a fallen Gael, it may come with a story attached—someone will miss it.

Seax (Long Knife) — Blades, [Melee], 1d6, Reach, Reliable

The seax is a working blade first and a killing blade second: a tool that becomes violence when needed. Gaels carry them for camp labor, hide work, and road defense, while Fir Bolg versions are heavier and often stone-backed with a brutal wedge profile. Sídhe dislike the "bright insistence" of iron seaxes, but they respect the utility. In a cramped ruin, the seax is often the best thing you can draw.

Sídhe Thorn-Sabre — Blades, [Melee, Non-Iron, Sídhe-Made], 1d6, Reach, Reliable; Quiet

This curved bronze blade is made to move like a gesture—less clang, more cut. The spine is often inlaid with dark wood or horn, and the guard is minimal: the Sídhe do not build weapons for prolonged shield-walls. Many thorn-sabres are named, and drawing one can be a declaration of personal intent. Against iron armor it bites less cleanly, but against flesh it is swift and decisive.

Axes & Choppers

Hand Axe — Blunt Weapons, [Melee], 1d6, Reach, Common; Loud

A hand axe is a tool that becomes a weapon the instant it has to. Gaels carry them for woodcutting and camp, Fir Bolg favor broader heads for splitting timber and bone, and Fomorians use them as cruel hooks. In Sídhe hands, an iron axe feels wrong—so Sídhe often prefer bronze or stone-headed versions, traded dearly or crafted by hidden smiths. The sound of an axe blow carries farther than a knife's cut; use it when you accept attention.

Fir Bolg Stone-Cleaver — Blunt Weapons, [Melee], 1d8, Reach, Armor Breaker (+10 vs heavy armor)

Carved from dense stone and hafted with layered rawhide, this cleaver is a relic of older wars. It does not "slice"—it crushes and splits, leaving ugly wounds and shattered shields. Fir Bolg warriors treat it as proof they don't need iron to kill you. It is heavy to carry, but it survives abuse that would ruin finer weapons.

Spears & Polearms

Spear — Polearms, [Melee, Reach], 1d8, Near, Set vs Charge (+20 when braced)

The spear is the most honest weapon in Éire: cheap, effective, and terrifying in a line. Gael spears are often iron-tipped, Fir Bolg spears may be bone or flint, and Sídhe spears tend toward bronze with slender leaf heads. In tight woods it can be awkward, but on roads and in clearings it rules. In social scenes, a spear carried openly is a statement: you expect trouble, or you want people to believe you do.

Sídhe Reed-Spear — Polearms, [Melee, Reach, Non-Iron, Sídhe-Made], 1d8, Near, Set vs Charge (+20 when braced); Quiet; Disassembly

A reed-spear is built to travel: it can break down into sections, hide in a bundle, and reassemble with a twist of cord. The head is bronze, the shaft laminated wood or reed wrapped with resin and thread. It is favored by Hostborn and Hollow Ways walkers who cannot afford to clank like soldiers. Many carry a tiny charm on the lashings—part tool, part witness.

Fomorian Hook-Spear — Polearms, [Melee, Reach], 1d10, Near, Hook/Trip (Director's call); Loud

The hook-spear is less about killing than controlling: it catches a shield rim, a belt, an ankle, and pulls you into a bad place. Fomorians favor it for shore raids and bog ambushes, where footing is already treacherous. The head is often barbed or jagged iron, and the haft may be reinforced with bone. When one appears, it signals a fight where someone will be taken, not merely wounded.

Clubs & Blunt

Oak Cudgel — Blunt Weapons, [Melee, Improvised], 1d6, Reach, Common; –10 if poorly balanced

A cudgel is the simplest protection—wood in hand, fear in the eyes of whoever sees it raised. Sídhe favor hard, dark woods cut under moonlight, often wrapped in cloth to keep it from slipping in rain. It won't pierce armor, but it breaks fingers, jars ribs, and discourages pursuit. In sanctuaries, a cudgel is "acceptable" in ways blades are not.

Fir Bolg Hammer-Club — Blunt Weapons, [Melee], 1d8, Reach, Defensive (+10 to parry-style rulings)

Heavy, ugly, and brutally effective, these are made for breaking shields and knocking people down in mud. Fir Bolg hammer-clubs often feature stone heads bound with braided sinew and sealed with pitch. They are not refined weapons; they are survival against larger foes. Carrying one marks you as someone who expects to be outnumbered.

Bows & Slings

Shortbow — Archery, [Ranged], 1d6, Near, Quiet; –10 in rain/wind

Gael shortbows are common among hunters and raiders, and Sídhe versions are often laminated and weather-resisting. In wet Éire, bowstrings are as important as the bow: spare strings are survival. A shortbow's biggest advantage is fear—being watched from hedges changes how humans move. In courts, bows are often unwelcome; on roads, they are respect.

Sídhe Whisper-Bow — Archery, [Ranged, Non-Iron, Sídhe-Made], 1d6, Near, Quiet; –10 in rain/wind; Weather-True

Built with layered woods and sealed in resin, the whisper-bow keeps tension better in damp air. It is often painted in plant tones that refuse to stand out, and its string is treated with oils that resist swelling. Sídhe arrows may be bronze-headed or bone-tipped, designed to kill without the "iron insult." When a whisper-bow is drawn, the sound is minimal—just a soft creak like a branch.

Sling — Archery, [Ranged, Cheap], 1d4, Near, Ammo common; –10 vs armored

Slings are everywhere because stones are everywhere. Fir Bolg sling craft can be terrifying—lead-like stones, sharp river rock, and accuracy earned from childhood. A sling is easy to hide, easy to justify as "not a weapon," and still capable of cracking skulls. In ambush scenes, a sling is often the first hurt you never saw coming.

Shields

Shield (Round/Kite) — Shields, [Defense], —, —, Block; Bash 1d6; Cover +10 vs arrows when braced

Shields don't "deal damage," but they change who survives. Gael shields are common: wood with leather facing and an iron boss; Sídhe shields tend to avoid iron and use bronze or hardened wood bosses instead. In wet weather, a shield is also a roof—windbreak, sled, stretcher, and table. In a duet game, a shield often reads as "I plan to live."

Sídhe Wicker-Heart Buckler — Shields, [Defense], —, —, Block; Bash 1d4; Quiet; Fragile

A small buckler woven and resin-hardened, designed to deflect rather than absorb. It travels easily and doesn't clang like a soldier's gear. It won't endure a prolonged battering, but it turns a lethal strike into a survivable one—especially when combined with clever movement. Among the Sídhe, bucklers often carry spiral patterns that serve as subtle witness marks.

ARMOR & PROTECTIVE WEAR

Padded / Gambeson — [Armor], DR 1, No Stealth penalty; cheap warmth

Quilted cloth armor is the most common protection on the island because it's practical: it keeps you warm, blunts cuts, and doesn't rust. Sídhe versions often include hidden pockets for tokens—ash pinch, salt fold, cord loop—built into the garment like habits of survival. A gambeson also "reads" differently in courts: less a warrior's show, more a traveler's necessity. In wet Éire, it may be the single best purchase you make.

Leather Armor — [Armor], DR 2, –10 Stealth if creaky

A leather jerkin is road armor—quiet enough until soaked, then it creaks and clings. Sídhe leatherwork tends to be lighter and better oiled, often dyed in plant tones that fade into hedges. Fir Bolg leathers are heavier, layered, and built to survive hard labor. A jerkin is also a statement: you expect trouble, and you intend to keep your ribs intact.

Scale / Brigandine — [Armor], DR 4, –20 Stealth; bulky

This is where armor begins to look like a choice rather than clothing. Human brigandines often hide iron plates; Sídhe versions avoid iron when possible, using bronze scales, horn, or hardened wood inserts. It's not as strong as true mail, but it's far easier to travel in and less likely to anger the old sensitivities of the People. When worn openly, it can invite attention from hunters who assume you're worth robbing—or worth killing.

Bronze Scale Coat (Sídhe or Gael Elite) — [Armor], DR 4, –20 Stealth; bulky

Bronze scale is expensive and loud in its own way: not clang, but gleam. Sídhe scale coats are often dull-finished and hung under cloaks to avoid broadcasting. They resist rot and wet better than iron, and they feel "less hateful" to Sídhe bodies. In politics, bronze armor signals status—either someone important, or someone who stole from the important.

Chain Shirt — [Armor], DR 3, –10 Stealth; good coverage

Iron mail is excellent protection—and for the Sídhe, it is also misery. Wearing it close to skin can provoke discomfort, spiritual cold, and increased vulnerability interactions (Director call consistent with shared Sídhe traits). Gaels prize it because it saves lives; Fomorians prize it because it lets them wade into spear points. If a Sídhe must wear mail, they often line it heavily and keep it as brief as possible.

Fomorian Bone-Cage Harness — [Armor], DR 2, –20 Stealth; bulky; Loud

This is protection made from intimidation: ribs, plates, and lashed bone sewn into thick hide. It is not "better armor" than scale; it is armor that turns every movement into a threat display. Fomorians decorate it with seaweed cords and trophy charms, and it carries the stink of shore raids. Wearing one marks you as monstrous to most eyes—and that can be a weapon by itself.

Fir Bolg Hide-Wrap Warcoat — [Armor], DR 2, –10 Stealth if creaky

Layered hides stitched with sinew and sealed with pitch, built to survive bog cold and mountain wind. Fir Bolg warcoats are less rigid than brigandine and more forgiving in rough terrain. Many include loops for stone tools and cords, reflecting a culture that expects gear to do double duty. It is excellent in storms and miserable in heat.

CORE GEAR KITS (SÍDHE, GAEL, FIR BOLG)

Backpack Kit — [Gear], bedroll, flint, needle/thread, reduces "forgot it" penalties

A proper kit is not fancy; it is *forgiving*. Sídhe kits often include a little ash tin, a salt fold, and cord lengths pre-knotted for common tasks, reflecting the culture's reliance on form and witness. Gael kits are sturdier and more utilitarian—iron tools, heavier straps, rough repairs. Mechanically, this kit exists to prevent the "we can't because we forgot" stall: it justifies reduced penalties or a +10 when having basic supplies matters.

Sídhe Token-Pouch — [Gear], tokens kept dry/ready, +10 when proper casting token is required and you have it prepared

This is a small oilskin pouch with inner cloth pockets meant for salt, ash, thread, cord, and a mirror shard. In Sídhe culture it's treated like underwear: private, necessary, not shown off. It doesn't grant power by itself; it grants

readiness. In wet Éire, "dry tokens" is often the difference between clean casting and rushed improvisation.

Fir Bolg Work-Rig — [Gear], stone blade, cord, hook, hide patch, +10 to field repairs and securing loads when used

Fir Bolg rigs are practical bundles worn on the body: tools that don't get lost when you fall in mud. The cord is thick, the hook is crude, and everything smells faintly of pitch. It's not elegant, but it works in storms and rough climbs. If you have this rig, you can justify being "never unprepared" in the harsh places Fir Bolg call home.

Gael Road-Pouch — [Gear], coin, chalk, iron nail, spare string, +10 to bribery/road dealings when the fiction supports it

The road-pouch is for the waking world: coin for tolls, chalk to mark routes, an iron nail for crude fixes, string for repairs. Sídhe may dislike the iron, but sometimes the road demands it. This pouch helps in social navigation and small logistics, not in courtly sanctuaries. It is the kit of someone who has learned that talk and trade keep you alive as much as blades do.

Cloak, Travel-Worthy — [Gear], warmth, concealment, +10 to "blend as traveler" positioning when appropriate

A cloak in Éire is shelter you can wear. Sídhe cloaks are often treated with oils and dyed in plant tones; some are woven to break outline in mist. Gael cloaks are heavier and smell of smoke. A cloak provides permission: you can plausibly hide a buckler, wrap a child, or vanish against a hedge for a moment. It is also a social symbol—who may approach a hearth, who may be turned away.

Boots, Bog-Sole — [Gear], sure footing in wet ground, reduces penalties for slip/poor footing rulings

Bog-soles are layered leather with rough treads; Fir Bolg versions sometimes include woven reed mats tied on for crossings. Sídhe boots often use softer materials but better balance, built for quiet step. Mechanically, these boots reduce the Director's urge to hammer you with footing penalties every scene—wet ground remains dangerous, but you're not helpless.

Rope (50 ft) — [Gear], climb/secure, +10 Athletics when anchored well

Rope is life in ruins and cliffs. Sídhe rope is often braided and treated to resist wet, sometimes marked with subtle knot patterns for quick measures. Fir Bolg rope is thicker and rougher, meant to haul weight. Any character who travels the island seriously carries rope, because "we can't cross" is how people die.

Lantern + Oil — [Gear], light, wind-resistant; oil is a hazard

A hooded lantern is a human road tool; Sídhe often prefer candles and covered light, but in storms a lantern is reliable. Mechanically it supports stealth and travel scenes: you can see without automatically advertising yourself. If paired with General Magick like Lantern-Refusal, it becomes even more useful—without changing the core rules.

Waterskin — [Supply], hydration, critical in heat

Waterskins and bowls matter in this module because water-work is constant: wells, fords, rain, brine-taint, rot scares. Sídhe bowls are often wood or clay, chosen because metal can "taste wrong" to them. Mechanically, having the right vessel supports proper form and helps justify +10 positioning in scenes where water matters.

TOOLS, IMPLEMENTS, AND CRAFT

Knife, Utility — [Gear], cutting tool, +10 to field tasks where a blade matters

Not every knife is a weapon choice. Utility knives are carried openly, used constantly, and rarely worth stealing. Sídhe tend to prefer bronze or stone utility blades because iron's presence is unpleasant and culturally "loud." Mechanically, a utility knife prevents silly bottlenecks: cutting bindings, shaping kindling, carving a peg—basic competency.

Flint & Steel / Fire Kit — [Gear], fire-starting, reduces penalties for making camp in bad weather

Making fire in wet Éire is never trivial. Sídhe often carry fire kits even if they can coax embers by magick, because magick costs Essence and attention. Mechanically, a fire kit keeps the campaign grounded: you can make a hearth when you must, and save Essence for when it matters.

Herbal Roll — [Medical], Herbalism, +10 when local plants are known

This is not "healing magic." It's practical care: herbs for swelling, stomach, sleep, and shock. Hearthbound Sídhe keep herbal rolls as culture; Fir Bolg keep them as necessity; Gaels keep them as folk practice. Mechanically, it supports recovery scenes and can soften consequences in a believable way.

Chalk / Charcoal — [Gear], marking and symbols, supports witness marks and quiet planning

Marks matter in Éire—especially if you avoid written messages that humans can seize. Sídhe use charcoal marks as subtle route language; Gaels use chalk for practical navigation. Mechanically, it supports planning, traps, and "we prepared" positioning, often worth +10 in the right moment.

ENCHANTED TOKENS AS EQUIPMENT (REMINDER)

Here, treat common tokens as gear that enables proper form:

Salt Fold — [Gear], courtesy and thresholds, supports guest-right form

Salt is both hospitality and boundary. Sídhe salt folds are wrapped to stay dry and "clean." Mechanically, it helps justify proper form bonuses when salt is appropriate.

Ash Tin — [Gear], hearth and hush, supports ash-form workings

A small tin of hearth ash carried like a relic. Mechanically, it supports proper form and readiness—especially in wet weather.

Cord Bundle — [Gear], knots and binding, supports cord-based workings and practical restraint

Cord is the Sídhe's favorite "soft law." Mechanically, it enables both mundane binding and several common magical forms.

VEHICLES OF ÉIRE

UNIVERSAL VEHICLE STAT LINE

Vehicle Name — Tags, **Speed**, **Handling**, **Armor/DR**, **Hull**, **Capacity**, Traits

- **Speed:** how fast it closes/escapes in chases (Director sets chase Clocks).
- **Handling:** a ± to Driving/Piloting rolls (commonly +10 for nimble, −10/−20 for heavy).
- **Hull:** how many "serious hits" it can take before disabled (use Wound logic or track as a simple number).

Director Tip (Chases): Run chases as Contests with Clocks. A mutual failure still produces a Lesser Win: someone gains ground, but pays for it (scraped vehicle, lost line-of-sight, collateral, etc.).

Mounts & Conveyances (Éire)

Pony / Small Horse — [Mount], Speed 3, Handling +10, DR 0, Hull 2, 1 rider + packs, Spooks; needs Riding

Small horses are common among Gaels and some Fir Bolg groups; Sídhe use them when they must operate in the waking world, though many prefer travel that doesn't leave hoofprints. A pony is practical: it carries burdens, shortens travel time, and changes how pursuit works. Mechanically, it's a mobility advantage that can also become a liability in bogs or tight hedges.

Fir Bolg Pack-Donkey — [Mount], Speed 2, Handling +0, DR 0, Hull 2, cargo heavy, Stubborn; Beast Handling helpful

Donkeys are the work-animals of hard ground. Fir Bolg donkeys are used to slick stone, steep paths, and ugly weather, and they don't panic as quickly as horses. Mechanically, they reduce travel burden problems and allow you to carry more gear without constant penalty. They are not fast—but they don't quit.

Currach (Skin Boat) — [Boat], Speed 2, Handling −10, DR 0, Hull 3, crew 1–2 + passengers (2–4 total), Depends on current; Quiet

A currach is a light frame boat covered in hide, excellent for rivers, lakes, and cautious coastal crossings. Sídhe currachs

are often quieter, with lashings that don't creak and hides treated to resist rot. Mechanically, it opens routes humans may not expect and allows chase scenes to shift terrain entirely. In storms, it's courage or death.

Cart, Two-Wheel — [Wagon], Speed 1–2, Handling –10, DR 0, Hull 2, cargo, Breaks on bad terrain; Loud

Carts are human logistics, not Sídhe elegance. They creak, leave tracks, and attract attention—but they move supplies, refugees, and loot. Mechanically, a cart changes what you can carry and who you can save, but it makes stealth harder and pursuit easier. In *The Fading*, carts are often moral choices: you can move people, but you will be seen.

DIRECTOR GUIDANCE: PRICING, SCARCITY, AND TONE

Keep equipment meaningful without turning it into a shopping game.

- **Common gear** is available in villages, camps, and trade points.
- **Quality Sídhe craft** is found in sanctuaries, courts, or via favors—not coin alone.
- **Iron weapons/armor** are common among humans; Sídhe often avoid wearing iron, but may wield stolen iron at cost.
- **Fomorian gear** is often brutal, barbed, and intended to control rather than duel.
- **Fir Bolg gear** is resilient, practical, and built for harsh terrain.

Reward players who describe smart use of gear with:

- reduced "forgot it" penalties
- justified +**10** positioning bonuses
- narrative permissions ("yes, you can do that because you brought the right thing")

QUICK EQUIPMENT PACKAGES (OPTIONAL, BOOK-READY)

These are not new mechanics—just fast bundles to speed character creation.

Sídhe Roadwalker Kit

Cloak (travel-worthy), Sídhe knife or dagger, token-pouch, rope, waterskin/bowl, hooded lantern, ash tin, salt fold.

Fir Bolg Trail Kit

Hide-wrap warcoat (or leather armor), stone-cleaver or spear, work-rig, rope, boots (bog-sole), herbal roll, waterskin, sling.

Gael Wayfarer Kit

Gambeson, dagger or seax, road-pouch, rope, hooded lantern, waterskin, chalk/charcoal, shortbow or spear.

CHAPTER 22: WEALTH, TRADE, AND AVAILABILITY

Éire is not a marketplace that happens to contain fae. It is a contested island where the People are fading, the Gaels spread like roots, and old enemies still breathe. Wealth here is not just coin. It is **safety**, **hospitality**, **names owed**, **sanctuary access**, **legal standing**, **rumor control**, and **the right to be served without being betrayed**.

This chapter adapts the core One-on-One gear-access logic to *The Fading* without changing the engine: items are obtained through **availability**, **position**, **trade**, and **consequence**—with rolls only when uncertainty matters and the Director wants the outcome to bite.

What "Wealth" Means in Éire

Most people on the island do not carry much coin. They carry **value** in forms that travel, hide, and survive wet ground.

Common Wealth Forms

- **Coin:** useful in towns and among Gaels; limited leverage in sanctuaries.
- **Trade Goods:** salt, good cloth, cured hide, arrowheads, oil, wax, iron nails, bronze scrap, strong cord.
- **Food & Drink:** often more valuable than coin in harsh travel arcs.
- **Services:** escort, healing, crafting, ferrying, guiding, hiding.
- **Favors & Oaths:** the Sídhe currency that truly moves doors.
- **Proofs:** tokens of legitimacy—court marks, sanctuary seals, named witnesses, ransom sigils.

Director guidance: In play, treat "wealth" as **permission and leverage** rather than spreadsheets. When players gain something valuable, it should change what scenes are possible.

The Three Currencies of the Island

In *The Fading*, value is usually paid in one of three ways. These are not separate subsystems; they're narrative categories that guide rulings.

A) Coin & Goods (Waking Trade)

Used with: Gaels, towns, mercenaries, bandits, smiths, ferrymen, smugglers.
Coin buys **things**. Goods buy **goodwill**.

- **Strength:** fast and simple.
- **Weakness:** coin can be stolen, and coin doesn't prove trust.

B) Hospitality & Sanctuary Credit (Sídhe Trade)

Used with: sanctuaries, hidden routes, hearth-keepers, host-tables, court emissaries.
Hospitality buys **time**, **safety**, **clean water**, **rest**, **information**, and **quiet repairs**.

- **Strength:** hard to steal; backed by culture.
- **Weakness:** dependent on reputation and recent behavior.

C) Favor, Oath, and Name (Court Trade)

Used with: courts, rival lineages, old families, oath-crafters, high-status enemies.

A favor buys **exceptions**: access to forbidden places, a delayed pursuit, a witness turned, a knife put away.

- **Strength:** the only "currency" that can outbid iron and armies.
- **Weakness:** favors grow teeth; the Director should treat them as future hooks.

Availability: The Only "Price Tag" That Matters

In One-on-One, availability is how you keep gear access playable. In Éire, availability is also political.

Availability Categories (Use These Often)

- **Common:** everyday items; easy to find in villages/camps.
- **Uncommon:** skilled craft, restricted materials, guarded stock, or niche items.
- **Rare:** court craft, sanctuary stock, special weapons/armor, reliable boats, good horses.
- **Mythic:** artifacts, named items, true relics, Tuatha-linked wonders.

Director rule of thumb:

- If it's **Common**, don't roll unless time pressure or secrecy matters.
- If it's **Uncommon**, require a contact, a scene, a trade, or a roll.
- If it's **Rare**, require leverage (favor, sanctuary credit, or a major trade) and expect consequences.
- If it's **Mythic**, it's an arc, not a purchase.

How to Acquire Things (The Four Methods)

Use whichever method matches the scene. Don't force every acquisition into the same shape.

Method 1: Purchase (Coin)

You pay, you get the thing—unless the seller fears the consequences of helping you.

When to roll: only if it's uncertain the seller will deal, you're under scrutiny, or you're negotiating hard.
Common rolls:

- **Bargain/Trade (PRE)** if you have it as a skill (or an equivalent social skill from your Skills of Éire list)
- **Deception (PRE)** if you're hiding who you are
- **Presence (PRE)** to command terms through force of personality

Win: you get it cleanly.
Lesser Win: you get it, but pay extra, lose time, or draw attention.
Loss: refused, overpriced, or someone alerts a rival.

Method 2: Barter (Goods)

Barter is the island's default. A rope coil, oil, salt, a bronze ring, a bundle of arrows—these are currency.

Rule: barter is easiest when your goods match the seller's current need (food in famine, oil in rain season, iron nails at a rebuild).

When to roll: when the trade is mismatched or socially risky.

Method 3: Favor / Sanctuary Credit (Sídhe)

A sanctuary can "sell" without selling. You may be granted gear, food, passage, or care as a matter of culture—if you are still inside the circle of the People.

Director guidance: treat sanctuary credit as a **pool of goodwill** you can spend, and which can be damaged by breaches of courtesy, violence under guest-right, or reckless exposure.

When to roll: when the sanctuary is divided, afraid, or testing you.

Method 4: Taking (Raid, Loot, Spoils)

Bandits do it. Fomorians do it. Desperate Sídhe sometimes do it too.

Rule: you can always take things in fiction; the cost is consequence.

- The Director should apply **Clock pressure** (pursuit, notoriety, retaliation) where appropriate.

- Taken items may be **hot** (identifiable), **cursed by rumor**, or **socially poisoned**.

Encumbrance, Bulk, and "What You Can Carry"

Use your core One-on-One approach: keep it simple, adjudicate with common sense, and apply penalties when the fiction demands.

Practical guidance:

- If you carry **too much**, expect **−10/−20** to Grace (movement), stealth, and endurance scenes.
- Bulky loads often justify **Disadvantage** when speed and quiet matter.
- Mounts and carts shift these costs—but increase visibility and trackability.

Director tip: Don't punish normal adventuring kits. Punish *hoarding* and *absurd loads*—and make the penalty felt at the worst possible moment.

Standard Goods of Trade (Éire Barter List)

Use these as "what people accept" without inventing a new money system.

Common Barter Goods

- Salt folds, wax, oil, lamp wicks
- Strong cord, stitched leather straps, needles, thread
- Arrowheads (bone/bronze/iron), sling stones (shaped)
- Cured hides, decent cloth, blankets, cloaks
- Dried fish/meat, grain, oats, hard cheese
- Bronze scrap, iron nails, workable toolheads
- Herbs (bundled), salves, alcohol for cleaning wounds (Gael stock)

High-Leverage Goods

- Good **bowstrings**, spare **lantern oil**, a **dry cloak**, a **sound rope coil**
- A **service**: healing, escorting, guiding, ferrying
- A **seal/token** from a known sanctuary or court

Sídhe Craft vs Human Craft (Availability Notes)

Sídhe-made items often have one of the following truths:

- They are **quiet**, **weather-resilient**, and built for travel.
- They are acquired through **hospitality, reputation, or favors**, not coin alone.
- They avoid iron when possible (bronze, bone, wood, resin), which affects where they can be found.

Human-made items:

- Are easier to buy with coin, especially iron weapons/armor.
- Carry less cultural weight among the Sídhe, sometimes even suspicion.

Fir Bolg craft:

- Durable, practical, harsh-terrain ready; often traded for food, safety, and tools.

Fomorian craft:

- Brutal and fear-coded; often "taken" rather than traded, and may carry social poison.

Legality, Suspicion, and Market Consequences

Éire is not neutral ground. When you acquire gear, consider who is watching and what it implies.

Director cues for when acquisition should trigger consequences:

- Buying weapons in bulk
- Seeking armor in a peaceful settlement

- Trading for boats during raids
- Purchasing iron while presenting as Sídhe
- Asking too many questions about sanctuaries and hidden roads

Typical consequences:

- A rival hears you're arming up
- A hunter marks you as "worth pursuing"
- A sanctuary downgrades trust ("not inside, but not outside")
- A local official demands a toll or "inspection"

The Acquisition Roll: When and How

Don't roll for shopping. Roll for **risk**.

Roll triggers

- Time pressure (pursuit, storm, enemy closing)
- Secrecy (you can't be recognized)
- Scarcity (uncommon/rare items)
- Politics (sanctuary/court complications)
- Negotiation (seller pushing back)

What skills to use

Use whatever is most appropriate from your Skills of Éire list, typically:

- **Trade/Bargain (PRE)**, **Persuasion (PRE)**, **Deception (PRE)**
- **Streetwise (AWR or PRE)** depending on how you defined it
- **Lore (INT)** when knowing who to ask is the whole challenge
- **Stealth (GRC/AWR)** if the "acquisition" is covert

Win: you get the item/service cleanly.
Lesser Win: you get it with a cost (more time, more goods, a tell, a witness).
Loss: you fail and add pressure (Clock tick, refusal, trap, betrayal).

Favors and Oaths as "Payment"

A favor is not a number. It is an obligation with teeth.

Use favors when:

- the item is rare
- the access is politically controlled
- you want the scene to matter later

Director guidance:

- A favor owed should become a **future hook**.
- Paying a favor should often require a **scene** (not a bookkeeping note).
- If players try to stack favors thoughtlessly, introduce consequences: rivalry, resentment, or "you are becoming like them."

Availability by Location (Fast Reference)

Use this when the Director needs a ruling instantly.

Gael Village

- Common gear, basic weapons, padded/leather, food, rope
- Uncommon: good bows, chain, horses (if prosperous)
- Rare: scale/brigandine, warhorses, large boat access

Fortified Town / Market

- Common + Uncommon widely available
- Rare exists, but costs attention and questions
- Iron is plentiful; Sídhe visibility risk increases

Sídhe Sanctuary

- Sídhe-made gear, tokens, quiet repairs, hospitality
- Rare items require reputation or favor

- Iron is frowned upon; heavy iron presence is controlled/limited

Fir Bolg Hold / Camp

- Tough gear, hides, stone tools, slings, practical supplies
- Trades favor food, safety, and honest labor
- Rare: specialized mounts, exceptional craft

Fomorian Shore / Raid Cache

- Brutal weapons, hooks, nets, bone harnesses
- Acquisition is usually "taking," with immediate consequence
- Items are "hot" socially and may attract pursuit

Closing: Keep It Moving

The Fading is about survival under pressure, not inventory management. Use wealth and availability to create choices:

- Do you buy iron to live another day, knowing it may cost you later?
- Do you spend sanctuary credit now, risking being turned away later?
- Do you owe a favor to a rival court to get a boat before the storm?
- Do you steal what you need and accept the hunt that follows?

If the choice matters, play the scene. If it doesn't, handwave the purchase and get back to the road.

CHAPTER 23: VEHICLES & TRAVEL

Éire is not large on a map, but it is large in the body. Wet ground steals speed. Hedges steal line-of-sight. Rivers split routes. Fog turns a straight road into a maze. The People learned long ago that distance is not measured in miles—it is measured in **who notices you**, **who can follow**, and **how many mistakes you can afford before the island makes you pay**.

Travel in *The Fading* is therefore not "downtime between scenes." It is a scene generator. It is how the Director applies pressure, reveals the waking world, and makes the Protagonist's choices matter: do you move fast and risk being seen, or move quiet and risk being late? Do you take the ford and face the watchers, or the bog path and face your own exhaustion?

This chapter provides:

- how to run overland travel in a duet-friendly way
- how to use mounts, carts, and boats without changing core rules
- how to run **chases** using the One-on-One chase approach (Contests + Clocks), tuned to Éire's terrain and threats
- common travel complications, including iron, witness sites, and weather

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The Vehicle Stat Line (Reminder)

All mounts and conveyances use the One-on-One universal vehicle stat line:

Vehicle Name — Tags, **Speed**, **Handling**, **Armor/DR**, **Hull**, **Capacity**, Traits

- **Speed:** how fast it closes/escapes in chases (Director sets chase Clocks).
- **Handling:** a ± to Driving/Piloting rolls (commonly +10 for nimble, −10/−20 for heavy).
- **Armor/DR:** how much damage reduction it provides against vehicle harm (or how well it shrugs off impacts).
- **Hull:** how many "serious hits" it can take before disabled (use Wound logic or track as a simple number).
- **Capacity:** riders, crew, cargo.
- **Traits:** special rulings hooks (Spooks, Breaks on bad terrain, Depends on current, etc.).

Director Tip (Chases): Run chases as Contests with Clocks. A mutual failure still produces a Lesser Win: someone gains ground, but pays for it (scraped vehicle, lost line-of-sight, collateral, etc.).

Travel as Play (Not Accounting)

Travel in *The Fading* should do at least one of these things:

1. **Create pressure** (time, pursuit, scarcity, exposure).
2. **Reveal the island** (a sanctuary sign, a Gael patrol, a ruined ford, a Fomorian smell on the wind).
3. **Cost something** (fatigue, supplies, attention, favors, or moral compromise).
4. **Offer a fork** (safe/slow vs fast/risky; visible/secure vs hidden/dangerous).

If a stretch of travel does none of these, summarize it in a few lines and move on.

Overland Travel Procedure (Duet-Friendly)

Use this simple loop for most travel days. It is intentionally light; it keeps the Director from becoming a cartographer.

Step 1: Choose Travel Mode

Pick one:

- **Quiet** (slow, stealthy, fewer contacts, less exposure)
- **Normal** (balanced)
- **Hard Push** (fast, risky, exhausting, leaves more sign)

Mechanical effect: This is primarily positioning:

- Quiet often justifies **Advantage** on avoiding detection and reduces the Director's urge to tick exposure clocks.
- Hard Push often justifies **Disadvantage** on endurance/stealth and increases Clock pressure, but gets you there sooner.

Step 2: Declare Route Type

Pick one:

- **Road/Track** (fastest; most watched)
- **Hedge/Field** (slower; uncertain cover)
- **Wood/High Ground** (hard travel; better avoidance)
- **Bog/Reedbed** (slow; dangerous footing; best for vanishing)
- **River/Coast** (boat-dependent; current/weather rules)

Step 3: Director Sets One Travel Clock

Choose one Clock that matches the situation (size as appropriate to your pacing):

- **Pursuit Closing** (a hunter band, Fomorian scouts, a Gael patrol)
- **Exposure/Attention** (rumors, witnesses, scent trail)
- **Weather Breaking** (storm front, fog wall, hard frost)
- **Supply Strain** (food, oil, rope integrity, mount fatigue)
- **Route Complication** (flooded ford, collapsed bridge, blocked pass)

Tick it when the fiction demands: failure, loud choices, iron presence, delays, or obvious tracks.

Step 4: Make One Meaningful Test (Only If It Matters)

Do not roll for "walking." Roll for what matters right now:

- **Endurance (END)** to keep moving without collapse
- **Awareness (AWR)** to spot watchers, ambushes, bad ground
- **Grace (GRC)** to move quietly or handle difficult footing
- **Presence (PRE)** to talk past patrols, demand passage, defuse suspicion
- **Intellect (INT)** to plan route logic, read signs, or recall safe paths
- **Might (MGT)** when travel becomes physical force (pulling a cart, freeing a stuck mount, wading current)

Roll d100 vs modified skill value of the relevant skill; apply Advantages/Disadvantages and Destiny as normal.

Step 5: Resolve Win / Lesser Win / Loss

- **Win:** you make progress cleanly; reduce Clock pressure or gain an advantage.
- **Lesser Win:** you progress, but pay: fatigue, supplies, a tell, or a Clock tick.
- **Loss:** you lose time or position, and the Clock advances meaningfully.

This keeps travel from stalling while still making it bite.

Terrain Rules of Thumb (Éire Tone)

These are not new mechanics—just consistent adjudication cues.

Roads and Tracks (Fast, Watched)

- More likely to trigger **Exposure/Attention** and social scenes.
- Easier for carts and mounts; harder to vanish.

Hedges and Fields (Cover with Teeth)

- Excellent for breaking sightlines.
- Also excellent for snagging gear, ruining quiet movement, and hiding watchers.

Woods and High Ground (Hard but Private)

- Slower and physically taxing.
- Best for avoiding patrols if you have the skill and patience.

Bogs and Reedbeds (The Disappearing Places)

- Slow, dangerous, exhausting.
- Strongly supports stealthy play, but punishes mistakes harshly.

Rivers and Coasts (Route-Changers)

- Boats create alternate maps.
- Weather and current matter constantly; a boat is leverage and risk.

Mounts, Carts, and Boats in Play

Vehicles change three things:

1. what you can carry
2. how fast you can move
3. how visible your passage is

Mounts

Mounts provide speed and carrying capacity—but they also:

- leave tracks
- require care and rest
- can panic (Spooks)
- constrain stealth routes

Director guidance: Let mounts matter. A mount isn't a passive bonus; it's a relationship with needs.

Carts and Wagons

Carts move burdens and people, but they:

- slow in bad terrain
- break on rough ground
- broadcast your presence

In *The Fading*, carts often create moral scenes: refugees, wounded, stolen goods, and choices about who gets carried.

Boats

Boats open routes that patrols don't expect. They also:

- depend on current
- suffer under storms
- are hard to hide

A boat is a promise: you can escape one kind of danger by accepting another.

The One-on-One Chase Mini-Loop (Éire Edition)

Chases are Contests with Clocks. Keep them short, sharp, and cinematic.

Step 1: Establish Stakes

Answer these aloud:

- **Who is chasing whom?**
- **What happens if the chaser wins?** (capture, injury, exposure, stolen item)
- **What happens if the quarry wins?** (escape, sanctuary reached, time bought)
- **What terrain is this chase in?** (road, hedge, bog, river)

Step 2: Set the Chase Clock

Choose a Clock size that matches urgency (typical 4–8 ticks):

- **Escape Clock** (quarry fills it to get away), or
- **Capture Clock** (chaser fills it to catch), or
- Two opposing Clocks if you want more tension.

Step 3: Choose Approaches Each Exchange

Each exchange, each side picks an approach that drives the fiction:

- **Sprint / Push** (END, Athletics, mount speed)
- **Cut the Line** (INT route choice; AWR spotting shortcuts)
- **Go Quiet** (GRC stealth through cover)
- **Force Through** (MGT—barriers, doors, crowds)
- **Turn Them** (PRE—shouts, deception, commanding space)
- **Vehicle Play** (use Handling modifier on the relevant driving/riding skill)

Step 4: Roll Contest + Apply Vehicle Stats

- Roll d100 vs the relevant skill's **modified skill value**.
- Apply **Handling** as a modifier when vehicle control is central.
- Apply Advantages/Disadvantages for terrain, fatigue, weather, and preparation.
- Destiny may be spent as normal.

Step 5: Tick Clocks Based on Outcome

- **Win:** you tick your Clock (or untick theirs) by 1–2 (Director's call by how strong the win is).
- **Lesser Win:** tick by 1, but pay a cost (fatigue, damage, lost gear, exposure).
- **Loss:** the other side ticks, and you suffer a complication.

Mutual failure: still produce a Lesser Win for someone—someone gains ground, but pays for it (scrapes, collateral, lost line-of-sight, etc.). Keep it moving.

Vehicle Damage, Collisions, and "Serious Hits"

When a vehicle is harmed:

- Apply **DR** against incoming harm, as appropriate.
- If the vehicle takes a **serious hit**, mark off **Hull** (or convert via your Wound logic).
- At **Hull 0**, the vehicle is disabled: lame mount, broken axle, torn hull, snapped mast.

Director guidance: Most chase "damage" should be:

- scraped wheels, twisted ankles, torn tack
- a thrown rider
- a cracked plank
- lost cargo
- not constant lethal crashes

Save catastrophic wrecks for dramatic failures or when the fiction demands it.

Éire Chase Complications (Director Prompts)

Use these when you need immediate texture. They don't add rules; they add sharp choices.

Roads

- A patrol appears ahead—do you slow and talk, or dive into hedge?
- A cart blocks the way; force through (loud) or detour (time).
- Loose dogs notice scent.

Hedges/Fields

- Thorns tear cloak and snag gear—drop something or lose speed.
- A hidden ditch—risk injury or slow down.
- A farmer's shout draws eyes.

Woods/High Ground

- Slick stone and root-lattices—one wrong step costs dearly.
- A fallen tree blocks the line—climb, crawl, or detour.
- An owl-beast or strange silence warns of "old ground."

Bogs/Reedbeds

- Ground "gives"—choose: lose boot, lose speed, or take a hard fall.
- Reed walls collapse—brief blindness.
- Something moves under the waterline.

Rivers/Coasts

- Current drags you off line; Handling matters more.
- Sudden wind turns a safe crossing into a fight for control.
- A hidden sandbar or rock tooth.

Fast Travel Outcomes (When You Don't Want a Full Scene)

When travel is not the focus but still matters, use one quick outcome roll for the whole stretch:

- **Win:** arrive clean; no Clock tick; gain one minor advantage (time, morale, dry gear).
- **Lesser Win:** arrive, but pay one cost (fatigue, supplies, minor attention).
- **Loss:** delay + complication + a Clock tick (exposure, pursuit, weather, or supplies).

This keeps pacing tight without making the world feel weightless.

Closing: The Island Remembers

In *The Fading*, travel is never neutral. The island remembers footprints, smells, broken reeds, shouted names, and iron clatter. If the Protagonist moves with care—quiet forms, proper witness, respectful passage—Éire sometimes allows them to pass unseen.

If they move loud, desperate, or cruel, Éire answers in the only language it has: **attention, consequence, and the closing of the net.**

CHAPTER 24: COMBAT & HARM

Violence in Éire is rarely "fair." It is sudden, wet, close, and watched—by hedges, stones, wells, and people who will remember what you did even if they do not admit it. The Sídhe are not built for loud wars of steel and banners; they survive through **position**, **timing**, **courtesy**, and the ruthless skill of turning a single moment into escape.

This chapter is a quick reference to run fights cleanly using the core One-on-One engine: d100 rolls vs **modified skill value**, Advantages/Disadvantages, Destiny, and the existing harm/wound handling. It adds Éire guidance—what fights feel like, what consequences matter, and how to keep combat sharp rather than sprawling.

Combat Core

Combat uses the standard One-on-One resolution flow:

- Choose an approach and relevant skill (weapon skill, brawling, athletics, tactics, etc.).
- Roll **d100 vs modified skill value** (apply Advantages/Disadvantages).
- Spend **Destiny** normally (as established in your core rules).
- Resolve **Win** / **Lesser Win** / **Loss** with clear fictional positioning.
- Apply **damage/harm** only when the fiction supports a clean hit, and then reduce it with armor **DR** as normal.

Director principle: Combat is a series of *meaningful exchanges*, not a grid exercise. Each exchange should change the situation.

The Combat Exchange (Fast Procedure)

Use this for each "beat" of violence:

1. **Declare intent:** strike, disarm, shove, escape, pin, intimidate, protect someone, etc.
2. **Set positioning:** cover, distance, footing, surprise, numbers, visibility.
3. **Roll:** attacker (or active party) rolls d100 vs modified skill value.
4. **Outcome:**
    - **Win:** you achieve intent; if it's an attack, apply damage; if it's control, apply restraint/position shift.
    - **Lesser Win:** mutually failed rolls but lesser Degree of Failure; you achieve intent, but pay a cost (take a hit, lose ground, drop gear, Clock tick, exposure).
    - **Loss:** you fail and the opponent gains advantage, lands harm, or forces a worse position.
5. **Determine Degree of Success/Failure**

Keep exchanges decisive. If nothing changes, the exchange doesn't count—make a stronger ruling.

Resolution Reference:

Test: roll d100 ≤ skill/attribute.
Contest: both roll; success beats failure; compare DoS/DoF.
Mutual failure: least bad gets a Lesser Win.
Adv/Disadv: ±10/±20/±30.
Destiny: +10 to you and/or −10 to them per point; stacks.

Degree of Success/Failure (DoS/DoF) Reference:

Modified Skill Value (MSV) = base skill after all situational modifiers (including Advantage/Disadvantage handling and any ± adjustments).

Degree of Success (DoS) = MSV − Roll (if the result is 0 or higher).

Degree of Failure (DoF) = Roll − MSV (if the result is higher than MSV).

Range & Distance (Reference)

Use the same simple range bands as the equipment chapter:

- **Reach:** touching distance, grapples, knives, clinch
- **Close:** across a room or small clearing
- **Near:** across a street
- **Far:** across a field
- **Extreme:** rare in Éire; long shots, ships, cliff-to-cliff

Director cue: In hedges, bogs, and woods, "Far" is uncommon—sightlines don't last. Most fights collapse to Reach/Close quickly.

Damage & DR (Reference)

Weapons list **damage dice**; armor lists **DR**. Apply them exactly as your core rules specify.

- Roll the weapon's **damage** on a hit. Add **Edge Damage Bonus,**
- Subtract the target's armor **DR** as normal (or apply it via your Wound logic).
- If damage is reduced to 0, the hit may still create a **tell** (bruise, stagger, cracked strap) at the Director's discretion.

Éire tone: Even small wounds matter in wet cold. A "minor" cut can become infection, weakness, or pursuit failure later if the Director chooses to pressure it.

Advantage/Disadvantage: The Combat Currency

In *The Fading*, most combats are won before damage is rolled —by who has position.

Common sources of **Advantage**:

- surprise, unseen approach, high ground
- target off-balance (mud, roots, ford stones)
- shield braced, cover used correctly
- enemy distracted by courtesy pressure, crowd, or fear
- ambush timing, coordinated Companion move

Common sources of **Disadvantage**:

- slick ground, bog suction, thorn snag
- fighting while exhausted or carrying bulk
- iron-heavy space impacting Sídhe focus and composure
- being outnumbered in Reach
- loud movement drawing extra actors into the scene

Director tip: Default to ±10/±20 positioning modifiers or Advantage/Disadvantage instead of inventing special rules.

Edge and Edge Damage Bonus Reference:

If attacker wins with success vs failure:
Edge = attacker DoS + defender DoF
If both succeed and attacker wins:
Edge = attacker DoS – defender DoS
If attacker wins by mutual failure (Lesser Win):
Default is **positional Lesser Win** (no damage).
If the Director allows damage, treat **Edge Damage Bonus as +0** (see below).

Edge Damage Bonus (added to Rolled Damage):

Edge **0–9: +0**
Edge **10–19: +2**
Edge **20–29: +4**
Edge **30+: +6**

Converting Damage Score to Wound Tier (Reduced by DR):

Damage Score **1–6: Light Wound**
Damage Score **7–12: Medium Wound**
Damage Score **13–18: Severe Wound**
Damage Score **19+: Critical Wound**

Control Outcomes (More Common Than Killing)

Many fights in Éire are decided by **control**, not slaughter. Treat these intents as fully valid "attack" equivalents:

- **Disarm:** remove weapon, force drop
- **Trip/Shove:** knock prone, push into mud/water, break line
- **Grapple/Pin:** restrain briefly, prevent escape
- **Drive Back:** force retreat from threshold/door/bridge
- **Protect:** interpose, shield someone, deny line-of-sight
- **Escape:** break contact and leave the scene

On a Win: the control effect happens.
On a Lesser Win: it happens, but costs you (you take harm, lose gear, or trigger pursuit pressure).
On a Loss: the opponent gains the control advantage instead.

Wound Tier Effects:

Healthy: No wound penalties.

Light Wound: Disadvantage –10 to relevant physical actions; you're hurt but functional.

Medium Wound: Disadvantage –20 to relevant actions; you can still act, but every action costs—this is where the fight changes.

Severe Wound: Disadvantage –30 to relevant actions; survival/extraction become immediate concerns (retreat, Full Defense, desperate tactics).

Critical Wound: You are Down (incapacitated or barely functional). The Director enforces the scene's stakes—captured, bleeding out, dying, or otherwise removed from control unless immediate aid changes the outcome.

Fighting in Sanctuaries and Under Guest-Right

Violence in a sanctuary or under Guest-Salt is not "just combat." It is a cultural breach with consequences.

Director guidance (no new mechanics required):

- Even if you win the fight, you may lose **standing**, **hospitality**, **future access**, or incur an **Oath/Consequences Clock**.
- Witness sites (hearth, well, threshold stone) can make outcomes socially "stick."
- Sídhe communities may treat unnecessary killing as a stain that travels faster than rumor.

Use consequences and Clocks to make the setting matter without altering combat rules.

Combat and Magick (Reference)

Magick does not replace combat rules; it **creates positioning**.

- Harmful workings (when they deal damage) use weapon-like damage and normal DR handling.
- Disruption workings commonly create Advantage/Disadvantage or force movement outcomes.
- Essence costs and Main actions matter—magick is a choice under pressure.

Director cue: In Éire, "loud" magick (big tells, obvious effects) often increases Exposure/Attention pressure, even when successful.

Common Éire Complications (Quick Prompts)

Use these to make fights feel like the island:

- **Mud-slick footing:** someone loses ground on a Lesser Win
- **Hedge-snare:** cloak/strap catches; drop something or take Disadvantage next beat
- **Cold hands:** fine actions suffer (bow reload, knot-tying)
- **Crowd pressure:** witnesses shift the social outcome
- **Iron proximity:** Sídhe discomfort, focus penalties, or Disadvantage where appropriate
- **Waterline hazards:** fords and bog pools turn retreat into danger

Ending Fights Cleanly (Don't Grind)

A duel game shines when fights end with a decision, not attrition. End combat when one of these happens:

- one side **escapes**
- one side **surrenders** (often due to social pressure, not mercy)
- one side is **disabled** or cannot continue
- a third party arrives and changes the stakes
- a Clock reaches a breaking point (pursuit, exposure, weather)

Director principle: If the outcome is obvious, make a ruling and move on.

Wound Stacking Reference:

If a new wound tier is HIGHER than your current tier:
Set your current tier to the new tier
Reset Strain to 0
Example: You are Light, then take Medium → you are now Medium, Strain 0.

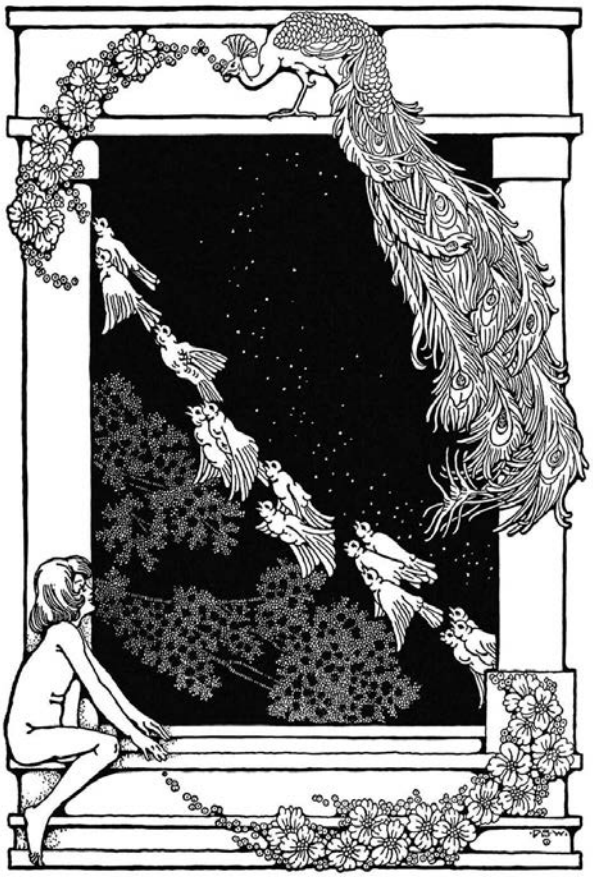
B) If the new wound tier is EQUAL to your current tier:
Escalate one tier
(Light→Medium→Severe→Critical)
Reset Strain to 0
Example: You are Medium, then take another Medium → you become Severe, Strain 0.

C) If the new wound tier is LOWER than your current tier:
Increase Strain by 1
If Strain would become 2: reset Strain to 0 and escalate one tier

CHAPTER 25: RECOVERY, REST, AND CONSEQUENCES

In Éire, harm is not only what wounds the flesh. Cold steals breath. Wet gear becomes misery. Fear becomes hesitation at the wrong moment. A bruised ankle becomes a failed ford. The Sídhe are fading, which means recovery is never just "HP back." It is **time**, **warmth**, **hospitality**, and whether the island lets you be unseen long enough to heal.

This chapter is a brief reference for how to handle recovery and consequences in *The Fading* without altering core rules: use your standard One-on-One consequence logic, lean on Clocks when something should linger, and treat rest as a scene with stakes when the story demands it.



Recovery Philosophy (Éire Tone)

Recovery should do three things in this module:

1. **Restore capability** so play keeps moving.
2. **Preserve pressure** so choices still matter.
3. **Create scenes** (hearth rest, sanctuary negotiation, field triage, risky travel while hurt).

Director guidance: Don't trap the Protagonist in "weeks of downtime." Instead, recover what's reasonable, but leave a mark—fatigue, suspicion, a debt, a Clock, a vulnerability in the next conflict.

What Counts as "Rest" in Éire

Rest is not a single switch. It has levels.

A) Breather (Minutes)

A breather is catching your breath, re-wrapping a strap, drinking, and regaining composure.

- **Use it for:** ending panic, regaining readiness after a chase, quick triage.
- **Typical outcome:** clears minor scene penalties and stabilizes "shaken" positioning.
- **Director cue:** In unsafe places, a breather often ticks a Clock (pursuit/exposure).

B) Camp Rest (A Night, Exposed)

A night in the wild is rest, but it's not safety.

- **Use it for:** meaningful recovery when you *must* sleep outside a sanctuary.
- **Typical cost:** wet cold, watch duty, supplies, or risk of discovery.
- **Director cue:** In Éire, a wild camp almost always carries a consequence risk—use a Clock (Weather Breaking, Pursuit Closing, or Supply Strain).

C) Hearth Rest (A Night, Sheltered)

A night under a real roof or protected overhang, with a stable fire.

- **Use it for:** strong recovery without halting the plot.
- **Typical cost:** coin, barter, obligation, or social exposure.

D) Sanctuary Rest (True Safety)

A sanctuary is the closest thing to "full recovery" the Sídhe can still claim.

- **Use it for:** clearing stacked consequences, repairing gear, and resetting pressure.
- **Typical cost: hospitality credit**, favors, oaths, or political entanglement.

Healing & Stabilization (Reference)

Use your core One-on-One harm/wound handling exactly. This section provides *Éire-facing cues* for when to call for rolls and what gear changes.

Common Recovery Skills

Use your existing Skills of Éire:

- **Healing/Medicine (INT)** for stabilization, serious care, infection prevention.
- **Herbalism (INT)** for salves, teas, poultices, and field remedies.
- **Endurance (END)** for pushing through pain, resisting cold, resisting exhaustion.
- **Athletics (GRC or END)** where movement rehab matters.
- **Sídhe Magick (INT)** only if a working is explicitly suited (School healing, Hearthward, etc.).

Healing Gear Hooks (No new rules)

- **Healer's Kit** supports clean stabilization (+10 positioning when supplies matter).
- **Herbal Roll/Pouch** supports minor remedies and comfort (+10 positioning when local plants/knowledge apply).
- **Warmth & Dry** is often more valuable than "medicine" for recovery scenes.

Director guidance: If the Protagonist has proper supplies and time, don't over-roll. Roll when:

- time is short
- the wound is severe
- conditions are filthy/wet/cold
- the Protagonist is being hunted
- failure would create an interesting consequence

Consequences in The Fading (How to Make Them Matter)

In One-on-One, consequences are the engine's teeth. In Éire, consequences should often be *social* and *environmental*, not just bodily harm.

Common Consequence Types (Éire List)

- **Physical:** sprain, bleeding, cracked rib, numb hands, bruised jaw
- **Gear:** torn strap, soaked powder/oil loss, snapped bowstring, blunted edge
- **Exposure:** rumor trail, witnesses, scent-followers, visible tracks
- **Hospitality:** loss of guest-right, suspicion in a sanctuary, "you are not welcome tonight"
- **Oath & Reputation:** debt owed, name marked, court insult carried
- **Weather & Terrain:** soaked kit, frostbite risk, bog-suction fatigue

Director cue: When a player takes a Lesser Win, pick a consequence that points forward. "You win, but..." should open the next scene.

Using CLOCKS for Lingering Problems (Reference + Guidance)

If something should persist, don't invent math. Use a Clock.

Recommended Recovery/Consequence Clocks

- **Infection / Rot Setting In** (dirty wound, wet cold, poor supplies)
- **Exhaustion** (hard pushes, sleep deprivation, long chases)
- **Exposure / Attention** (witnesses, rumor, scent trail)

- **Hospitality Strain** (sanctuary credit running low, repeated breaches)
- **Gear Failure** (fraying rope, cracked cart axle, torn boot sole)
- **Oath Debt** (a favor coming due, a promised task nearing demand)

Tick triggers: failure, reckless choices, bad weather, iron-heavy exposure, loud violence, neglecting care, traveling while injured.

Clear triggers: rest under safety, proper care, paying debts, repairing gear, making amends, or smart play that earns relief.

Cold, Wet, and Fatigue (Éire Pressure Without New Rules)

Don't create a new survival subsystem. Just apply consistent pressure.

When to Apply Pressure

- sleeping wet without fire
- traveling soaked in wind
- wading rivers repeatedly
- marching while injured
- wearing heavy gear for long stretches
- hauling bulk without mounts

How to Express It (Use Existing Tools)

- apply **−10**/**−20** positioning modifiers on relevant checks
- impose **Disadvantage** when conditions are extreme
- tick an **Exhaustion** or **Weather Breaking** Clock
- impose a consequence such as "numb hands" (affects fine tasks, archery, knotwork)

Recovery Costs That Fit the Setting

Recovery should have costs that feel like Éire, not a hospital bill.

Typical "Prices" for Better Recovery

- **Coin or barter:** food, oil, blankets, bandages
- **Time:** a day spent hidden means someone else moves
- **Exposure:** staying in one place creates a trail
- **Hospitality credit:** sanctuary goodwill spent
- **Favor/Oath:** a safer bed is never free at court level
- **Gear trade:** you give up something useful to get warmth/safety

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Quick Reference: Recovery Outcomes

Use these to resolve recovery scenes fast without losing weight.

Field Triage (Minutes)

- **Win:** stabilize and reduce immediate penalty; no new complication.
- **Lesser Win:** stabilize, but tick a Clock (infection/exhaustion/exposure) or consume supplies.
- **Loss:** stabilize fails or is incomplete; consequence worsens; Clock ticks hard.

Night Camp (Exposed)

- **Win:** meaningful rest; reduce fatigue; minor recovery.
- **Lesser Win:** rest, but pay (wet gear, watch trouble, exposure tick).
- **Loss:** poor sleep; complication (attack, storm, lost supplies) + Clock pressure.

Hearth/Sanctuary Rest

- **Win:** strong recovery; clear one lingering consequence or reduce a major penalty.
- **Lesser Win:** recover, but incur cost (favor, suspicion, obligation) or advance a social Clock.
- **Loss:** sanctuary complications (refused, tested, or exploited) create a new problem even if you sleep.

The Director's Rule: "Let Them Heal, But Keep the Story Moving"

A duet game thrives when recovery is meaningful but not paralyzing.

- If the Protagonist has **time** + **safety** + **supplies**, let recovery work.
- If they do not, let recovery **partially work** and convert the missing piece into a **Clock**, **debt**, or **exposure** that pushes forward.

Éire is harsh, but it is not a grind. It is a land of choices—and recovery is one of the sharpest.

CHAPTER 26: SOCIAL CONFLICT & THE WEIGHT OF COURTESY

In *The Fading*, a blade is rarely the cleanest weapon. A word can bar a threshold. A glance can turn a crowd. A courtesy phrase can make a lie "stick," or make violence unthinkable for a breath longer than it should. The Sídhe do not survive by being the strongest—they survive by knowing which rules are real in which room, and by making others obey them.

This chapter is a practical reference for running social conflict—negotiation, persuasion, deception, intimidation, and court maneuvering—using the core One-on-One engine. It also explains how **courtesy** functions as a kind of social physics in Éire: not mind control, not "social hit points," but a set of expectations that create leverage, consequences, and Clocks.

Social Conflict Core

Social conflict uses the standard One-on-One resolution flow:

- Identify the intent (convince, stall, extract truth, secure passage, shame, recruit, threaten, defuse).
- Choose the relevant social skill and roll **d100 vs modified skill value**.
- Apply Advantages/Disadvantages based on positioning, audience, standing, leverage, and risk.
- Spend **Destiny** as normal.
- Resolve **Win** / **Lesser Win** / **Loss** and apply consequences or Clock pressure if appropriate.

Director principle: A social exchange should change the situation, not just "advance dialogue." If nothing changes, make a stronger ruling.

The Social Exchange (Fast Procedure)

Use this for social scenes with stakes.

1. **Stake the ask:** What do you want? What does the other side want?
2. **Name the leverage:** coin, hospitality, fear, shame, proof, oath, reputation, threat of violence, promise of aid.
3. **Choose posture:** open courtesy, calculated neutrality, veiled threat, outright dominance, humble appeal.
4. **Roll once** when the outcome is uncertain.
5. **Apply outcome** and establish what changes immediately.

Recommended default: One decisive roll per meaningful social "turn," rather than many small rolls.

Courtesy as Mechanics (How It Works in Play)

Courtesy in Éire is not mere politeness—it is an enforceable expectation shaped by culture, witness sites, and the fear of being cast out.

Courtesy Creates Three Mechanical Effects

A) Permission
Courtesy grants access: a seat by the fire, a hearing, a safe night, a chance to speak before steel is drawn.

B) Positioning
Correct forms justify **Advantage** or +10/+20 modifiers because the fiction supports them: you are speaking inside the rules of the place.

C) Consequence Weight
A breach of courtesy creates real fallout: Hospitality Strain, Reputation damage, and pursuit Clocks. The island remembers.

Director cue: Don't make courtesy "mandatory roleplay." Make it the *smart move* that improves odds and reduces future trouble.

Guest-Right (Guest-Salt) and Sanctuary Etiquette

Guest-right is the most important courtesy structure in the module. It does not magically prevent violence; it makes violence **expensive**.

Under Guest-Right, Common Expectations

- The host offers food/water/shelter within their means.
- The guest does not harm the host's household, steal, or reveal sanctuary routes.
- Disputes are delayed, mediated, or moved outside the boundary.

Mechanical Guidance

- Entering under Guest-Right often grants **Advantage** to de-escalation and negotiation attempts (you are "inside the rules").
- Breaking Guest-Right should trigger a consequence and often a **Clock** (Hospitality Strain, Exile Mark, Rival Court Interest).
- Even if a guest "wins" by force, they may lose future access and protection.

The Social Weapons (Reference)

These are common "attack forms" in Éire. Each uses your normal d100 vs modified skill value resolution.

Persuasion (PRE)

Used to request, bargain, soothe, inspire, recruit, negotiate.

- Works best with real offers: safety, goods, information, mutual benefit.
- Strong in front of witnesses when you hold the moral high ground.

Deception (PRE)

Used to hide identity, misdirect, create false urgency, or present a clean lie.

- Strong when the mark wants to believe.
- Risk increases dramatically with witnesses, knowledgeable courts, and formal questioning.

Command / Authority (PRE)

Used to order, rally, enforce, and make others act "because you said so."

- Strong with social standing, uniforms, symbols, or a credible threat.
- Weak when you are out-ranked or obviously bluffing.

Intimidation (PRE, sometimes MGT)

Used to create fear, compliance, hesitation, or retreat.

- Strong in private, on roads, or when you can demonstrate capability.
- Risky in courts; intimidation can become a political crime.

Insight / Read Intent (AWR)

Used to detect lies, read fear, notice who leads, sense ambush in words.

- Often supports other rolls by creating positioning ("you know what they want").
- A Win may grant Advantage to your next social move.

Etiquette / Court-Law / Custom (INT or PRE)

Used to speak correctly, cite precedent, trap someone inside their own rules.

- Strongest in sanctuaries, halls, and formal assemblies.
- A Win here often makes your victory "stick" socially.

(Use your existing Skills of Éire list and attribute mappings—these are reference categories, not new skills.)

Social Range Bands

Not distance—**audience size and stakes**.

- **Private:** one-on-one; outcomes are immediate and personal.
- **Household:** small group; reputation effects begin.
- **Hall:** formal audience; witnesses make outcomes sticky.
- **Public:** community scale; consequences become lasting.

Director guidance: The bigger the audience, the more likely a social Win/Loss should create or tick a Clock.

Clocks for Social Pressure (Most Important Tool)

Social conflict in Éire thrives on Clocks because social outcomes linger.

Common Social Clocks

- **Hospitality Strain** (sanctuary patience running out)
- **Suspicion Rising** (someone is noticing inconsistencies)
- **Rival Court Interest** (you've drawn attention from powerful actors)
- **Exile Mark** (the community is turning against you)
- **Debt Coming Due** (favor/oath demanded)
- **Mob Mood** (crowd shifts toward violence or support)

Tick triggers: lying under witness, public disrespect, visible iron offense, threats, violence, refusing hospitality norms, humiliating someone important.

Clear triggers: apology with form, restitution, public gift, oath made and kept, surrendering an advantage gracefully, sharing information, taking blame strategically.

Win / Lesser Win / Loss in Social Scenes (What They Look Like)

Use the same outcome ladder you use everywhere else—just expressed socially.

Win

You get what you wanted, cleanly:

- passage granted, audience secured, patrol stands down, bargain accepted, accusation defused.

Lesser Win

You get it, but pay:

- you owe a favor, you're watched, you must give a hostage/token, you lose time, your name is recorded, a Clock ticks.

Loss

You don't get it, and pressure increases:

- refusal, insult, demand for proof, forced escort, public shaming, pursuit Clock begins, sanctuary doors close.

Director cue: Lesser Wins are where Éire shines. The Protagonist survives—and now owes someone.

"Proof" and "Witness" (The Éire Difference)

Many social conflicts hinge on whether words can be trusted. In Éire, proof is often physical and culturally meaningful.

Common Proof Forms

- a **token** from a sanctuary (salt fold, marked cord, carved stone)
- a **named witness** (someone known to the hall)
- a **sign of service** (healed wound, carried message, delivered ransom)
- a **forfeit** (weapon surrendered, iron left outside, cloak pinned)
- a **shared meal** (acceptance of hospitality)

Mechanical effect: proof commonly justifies **Advantage** or a +10/+20 modifier because it changes the fiction: the other side can safely believe you.

Social Conflict and Violence (When It Tips)

In *The Fading*, violence after words is rarely "sudden." It is the last beat of a social exchange.

Director guidance:

- Make the moment of escalation clear: who broke courtesy, who drew first, who is watching.
- If violence happens in a hall or sanctuary, immediately consider a **Hospitality Strain** or **Exile Mark** Clock.
- Winning the fight may still mean losing the political war.

Quick Reference: Common Courtesy Modifiers

Use these as consistent positioning cues (apply as Advantage/Disadvantage or ±10/±20).

Often helps (+10 / Advantage):

- correct titles and forms
- offering water/food first
- speaking under a proper witness (hearth/stone/well)
- presenting proof tokens
- choosing humility when you're in their space

Often hurts (–10 to –20 / Disadvantage):

- public disrespect or mocking
- refusing hospitality norms
- threatening without credible power
- lying under witness
- iron offense (in a place where it matters)

CHAPTER 27: CLOCKS, PRESSURE, AND PACING IN ÉIRE

Éire does not usually kill the Protagonist in one clean blow. It tightens. It watches. It remembers. In *The Fading*, the Director's best tool for making that tightening felt—without bogging play down—is the One-on-One **Clock**.

Clocks turn "ongoing problems" into something visible and playable. They make pursuit real. They make hospitality fragile. They make weather, rumor, and oath-debt feel like forces that move even when the Protagonist hesitates. Most importantly: Clocks help you pace a duet campaign so scenes stay sharp and choices stay meaningful.

This chapter is a module-facing reference: what Clocks do, when to start them, how to tick them, and what common Clocks look like in Éire.

What a Clock Is (Reminder)

A **Clock** is a tracked countdown (or buildup) that represents escalating pressure in the story. It advances when the fiction calls for it—usually on **Losses**, risky choices, delays, loud actions, or when consequences are ignored.

Clocks are not a "punishment meter." They are a pacing tool:

- to keep scenes moving
- to make stakes tangible
- to ensure that a Lesser Win still costs something
- to let problems persist without extra rules

When to Use a Clock (The Three Triggers)

Start a Clock when at least one of these is true:

1. **Time matters** (you can't just keep trying forever).
2. **Attention matters** (someone or something is noticing).
3. **Cost matters** (the Protagonist can "win," but must pay in pressure).

If none of those are true, you usually don't need a Clock.

Clock Sizes (Quick Guidance)

Use simple sizes. Don't overthink.

- **4-tick Clock:** urgent, immediate ("they're right behind you")
- **6-tick Clock:** standard pressure ("the village grows suspicious")
- **8-tick Clock:** slow burn ("a rival court mobilizes")

Director tip: In a duet game, Clocks resolve fast. Err toward smaller Clocks unless you want a long arc.

How Clocks Advance (Reference)

Advance Clocks when the fiction supports it. Common triggers:

- **On a Loss:** usually tick 1–2 (depending on severity).
- **On a Lesser Win:** tick 1, or tick a different related Clock as the "cost."
- **On loud choices:** violence in public, obvious magick, burning a bridge, leaving tracks.

- **On delay:** waiting, repeated attempts, long rests in unsafe areas.
- **On neglect:** ignoring injuries, failing to repair gear, refusing to pay debts.

Strong wins can reduce pressure:
A decisive Win may reduce a Clock, pause it, or shift it into a different kind of problem (escape pursuit, but create suspicion).

What Happens at Completion (Make the End Real)

When a Clock fills, something *happens*. It should be concrete.

- A patrol arrives.
- The sanctuary refuses you.
- The storm hits.
- Your oath is called in.
- The rival court moves against you.
- The scent trail is confirmed and hunters pick it up.

Avoid "you take –10 forever." Clocks should culminate in events and changed circumstances.

The Éire Rule: Use Clocks as "Invisible Enemies"

In *The Fading*, Clocks often stand in for opponents you can't stab:

- the island's weather
- rumor and witnesses
- hospitality's fragility
- iron encroachment and human organization
- old enemies stirring
- spiritual pressure of the Fading itself

This keeps the campaign tense even when no one is actively swinging a weapon.

Common Clocks in Éire (Ready Use Cases)

Below are the module's most useful Clocks. Each includes: what it represents, what ticks it, and what happens at full.

A) Pursuit Closing (4–6 ticks)

Represents: hunters, patrols, rivals gaining ground.
Tick when: the Protagonist makes noise, leaves tracks, delays, suffers Loss in travel, or uses obvious magick in sight of witnesses.
At full: contact—ambush, interception, siege of your refuge, or a forced chase scene.

Notes: This Clock often pairs well with an **Escape** Clock during active pursuit.

B) Exposure / Attention (6 ticks)

Represents: witnesses connecting your presence to trouble; rumor turning into a trail.
Tick when: you're seen clearly, asked your name repeatedly, leave identifiable signs, or act strangely in public.
At full: a named group knows who you are (or thinks they do) and begins acting on that knowledge—price on your head, hunters called, sanctuary questioned.

Director cue: Exposure does not always mean "combat." It can mean doors closing.

C) Hospitality Strain (4–8 ticks)

Represents: a sanctuary or household's patience wearing thin.
Tick when: you bring danger to the door, breach etiquette, threaten, lie under witness, refuse reasonable requests, or consume resources without reciprocation.
At full: hospitality is withdrawn: you are asked to leave, placed under watch, denied aid, or formally marked as unsafe.

Éire guidance: Hospitality is survival currency. This Clock should matter.

D) Oath Debt Coming Due (6–8 ticks)

Represents: a favor owed rising from "later" to "now."
Tick when: you rely on favors, accept court aid, borrow shelter, or promise outcomes you delay.
At full: the debt is called: a task demanded, a hostage requested, a public show of loyalty required, or a dangerous errand forced.

Director cue: Don't use this to punish. Use it to *generate the next arc.*

E) Weather Breaking (4–6 ticks)

Represents: storm, fog wall, frost, hard rain—conditions turning dangerous.
Tick when: you delay travel, camp exposed, fail an Endurance/travel roll, or push routes that tempt the sky.
At full: the weather hits as an active hazard: travel becomes near-impossible, boats become lethal, fires won't hold, exposure consequences intensify.

Éire tone: Weather is a predator you can't threaten.

F) Supply Strain (6 ticks)

Represents: food, oil, dry cloth, rope integrity, and mount condition slipping.
Tick when: you Hard Push travel, linger wet, lose gear, fail survival scenes, or feed others from your stock.
At full: a concrete shortage: no oil, no dry bedding, rope fails, mount lames, food is gone—forcing a trade/raid/aid scene.

G) Rival Court Interest (6–8 ticks)

Represents: political eyes turning toward the Protagonist.
Tick when: you humiliate someone publicly, display unusual power, claim relics, break hospitality in a notable place, or become a repeated rumor.
At full: a rival court acts: emissary arrives, a test is set, a bounty is offered, or a trap is laid.

Director cue: This Clock is best as a slow burn that makes the world feel alive.

H) Rot / Infection Setting In (4–6 ticks)

Represents: dirty wounds, bog exposure, sickness from cold and wet.
Tick when: injuries go untreated, camping is miserable, supplies are poor, or the Protagonist pushes while compromised.
At full: a real complication: reduced capacity until treated, fever scene, forced stop, or escalating harm per your core wound logic.

Important: Keep it playable—use it to force choices, not to stall the game.

Pairing Clocks (Two-Clock Patterns That Work)

Use paired Clocks to create layered pressure without complexity.

"Hunted on the Road"

- **Pursuit Closing** + **Weather Breaking**
  You can outrun people, but not the sky.

"Safe Place, Unsafe Welcome"

- **Hospitality Strain** + **Exposure/Attention**
  Even sanctuaries have limits, and rumors seep in.

"Court Help Has Teeth"

- **Oath Debt Coming Due** + **Rival Court Interest**
  Aid becomes obligation; obligation becomes politics.

"Starving Quietly"

- **Supply Strain** + **Exposure/Attention**
  Steal and be seen, or go hungry and weaken.

Using Clocks with Win / Lesser Win / Loss

Clocks are your cleanest "cost" tool.

- **Win:** reduce or pause a Clock; or gain a buffer ("you break line-of-sight").
- **Lesser Win:** succeed, but tick a Clock (often the best consequence).

- **Loss:** tick harder, or tick two related Clocks by 1 each.

Director tip: When unsure what cost to apply on a Lesser Win, tick a Clock. It keeps the story moving and makes the pressure visible.

Making Clocks Visible to the Player

In duet play, showing Clocks improves pacing and trust.

- Show the Protagonist the Clock title and ticks.
- Be clear what triggers it.
- Be clear what happens when it fills.

Exception: If a Clock represents secret plotting (Rival Court Interest), you can keep the exact details hidden while still showing "interest is rising."

Editor's Note: Having a single die displayed in the open to represent a Clock (d4, d6, d8) is handy to monitor a Clock's progression. Simply begin with "1" and advance the die's face as the Clock ticks.

CHAPTER 28: THREAT DESIGN & ENCOUNTER PRESSURE

In a duet game, "encounters" aren't balanced around a party. They're balanced around **pressure**. Threats in *The Fading* should feel like Éire feels: watched roads, hungry weather, old enemies who don't need fair fights, and politics that can ruin you without drawing steel. The Protagonist should win by being clever, prepared, and culturally aware—by choosing the right moment and the right ground—rather than by trading blows until someone drops.

This chapter is a quick Director toolkit for building threats and running encounters using the One-on-One engine: simple rolls, strong positioning, meaningful consequences, and Clocks that keep the story moving.

The Threat Model (What You're Building)

Every threat should be defined by four things:

1. **Goal:** what the threat wants right now (capture, rob, expose, punish, recruit, delay, feed).
2. **Method:** how it pursues that goal (ambush, intimidation, patrol, lure, social pressure, raid).
3. **Leverage:** what makes it dangerous (numbers, terrain, authority, cruelty, secrecy, iron, magic, reputation).
4. **Cost to the Protagonist:** what happens if it wins (harm, loss of gear, loss of hospitality, oath debt, exposure, forced detour).

You do **not** need long stat blocks to run most threats. You need clear intent and consequences.

The Encounter Spine (Fast Procedure)

Use this to frame almost any encounter—combat, social, chase, or mixed.

1. **Signal the threat** (a clue, a sound, a witness, a wrongness).
2. **Offer a choice** (route, approach, talk, hide, push through, pay, fight).
3. **Set one Clock** (pressure) that matters in this scene.
4. **Resolve 1–3 meaningful rolls** (not ten small ones).
5. **Apply Win / Lesser Win / Loss** with a clear change in situation.
6. **Carry fallout forward** (consequence, ticking Clock, new debt, new pursuit).

Director principle: An encounter should end with a changed map—literal or social.

Pressure First: Pick the Right Clock

In *The Fading*, Clocks are your primary encounter-balancing tool.

Common Encounter Clocks

- **Pursuit Closing** (they're gaining)
- **Exposure/Attention** (witnesses / rumor trail)

- **Hospitality Strain** (safe place turning unsafe)
- **Weather Breaking** (nature weaponized)
- **Supply Strain** (running out mid-encounter)
- **Oath Debt Coming Due** (the price of help)
- **Rival Court Interest** (political ripples)
- **Rot/Infection Setting In** (hurt + wet + time)

How to use:

- On a **Lesser Win**, tick a Clock as the cost.
- On a **Loss**, tick it harder or create a second Clock that must now be managed.

Threat "Weight" Without New Mechanics

Instead of "level," define threats by weight—how hard they are to handle without taking damage or consequences.

Weight 1: A Complication

One obstacle that can be solved with a single strong approach.

- Example: one suspicious ferryman; one crude road toll; one wolf circling.

Weight 2: A Scene Threat

Requires 2–3 exchanges or a clever pivot.

- Example: a patrol with authority; a hedge ambush; a sanctuary test.

Weight 3: A Crisis Threat

Multiple pressures at once; victory costs something real.

- Example: Fomorian raiders near a ford during storm onset; a rival court trap with witnesses; a fight while carrying refugees in a cart.

Director tip: Duet play is sharp—Weight 3 should be rare and dramatic.

Positioning: Your Real "Difficulty Dial"

Your easiest way to tune encounter difficulty is by shifting positioning and context, not stats.

Increase Difficulty By:

- poor footing (bog/river stones)
- night + no cover
- the Protagonist exhausted or injured
- being outnumbered in Reach
- iron-heavy environment impacting Sídhe comfort and focus
- hostile witnesses (public scene)
- time pressure (Clock already half full)

Decrease Difficulty By:

- surprise and preparation
- good cover or high ground
- sanctuary rules in your favor
- allies/Companion leverage
- proof tokens and correct courtesy
- terrain the Protagonist chose intentionally

"Moves" Threats Make (Director Reference)

Threats act like characters, but you can run them as a small set of moves. When unsure what happens next, pick a move that advances their goal.

Common Threat Moves

- **Cut off retreat** (force a choice)
- **Escalate social pressure** (public accusation, demand proof)
- **Separate the Protagonist from the Companion** (draw away, distract)
- **Attack the gear** (bowstring, rope, lantern oil, mount tack)

- **Use witnesses** (make the cost political)
- **Force bad ground** (push toward bog, river, hedge)
- **Offer a poisoned deal** (help, but at oath cost)
- **Call reinforcements** (tick Pursuit/Exposure Clocks)
- **Mark the Protagonist** (a tell that increases later scrutiny)

Designing Human Threats (Gaels)

Humans are not "monsters." They are organized, practical, and increasingly dominant.

Common Gael Threat Types

- **Road Patrol:** wants order, tolls, and names; dangerous with witnesses.
- **Bandit Crew:** wants goods and control; often avoids long fights.
- **Local Lord's Men:** wants compliance; escalates to capture and example-making.
- **Militia Mob:** wants a scapegoat; fear-driven and unpredictable.

Gael Leverage

- numbers, iron weapons, social authority, local knowledge, dogs, nets.

Director cue: Many Gael encounters are better as **social pressure** + **clocks** than as pure combat.

Designing Fir Bolg Threats (Remnants & Hard Folk)

Fir Bolg threats are often territorial and survival-driven.

Common Fir Bolg Threat Types

- **Boundary Enforcers:** want you to leave; will wound rather than kill if possible.
- **Desperate Raiders:** want supplies; will bargain if offered dignity and goods.
- **Old-War Holdouts:** hate courts; distrust hospitality politics; test you harshly.

Fir Bolg Leverage

- terrain mastery, tough gear, slings, endurance, willingness to endure hardship.

Director cue: Fir Bolg threats often offer *honest deals*: "pay, leave, prove you're not a hunter."

Designing Fomorian Threats (Old Enemies)

Fomorians are the module's "predator" faction: raids, control, and cruelty as method.

Common Fomorian Threat Types

- **Shore Raiders:** want captives, goods, and fear; retreat if resisted hard.
- **Bog Stalkers:** use terrain; aim to separate and take.
- **Court-Servant Monsters:** attached to some darker bargain; act with purpose.

Fomorian Leverage

- brutality, fear tactics, hooks/nets, ambush mastery, willingness to maim, willingness to take hostages.

Director cue: Fomorian encounters should feel like **capture risk** more than "hit point loss." Use Clocks: *Capture Closing*, *Dragged Under*, *Taken Alive*.

Beasts, Spirits, and Mythic Threats (Running Without Stat Bloat)

For non-humans, decide what kind of problem they are:

- **Hunter Beast:** tries to stalk and finish (wolf pack, boar, owl-beast).
- **Guardian:** blocks passage, tests worth, punishes disrespect (well spirit, threshold thing).
- **Corrupting Presence:** makes scenes harder over time (rot influence, cursed place).

- **Mythic Actor:** wants a bargain, a story, or a debt (sidhe rival, ancient watcher).

Mechanical approach:

- Give them a small set of "moves" (stalk, pounce, vanish, curse, demand).
- Express their danger with **positioning penalties** and **Clocks**, not pages of numbers.

Encounter Rewards (What Players Actually "Get")

In *The Fading*, "loot" is not only items.

Reward the Protagonist with:

- **time** (Clock relief)
- **safety** (a sanctuary contact)
- **standing** (hospitality credit, reduced suspicion)
- **proof** (token, witness, seal)
- **information** (routes, names, rival intents)
- **gear** (use standard availability logic)
- **future leverage** (a favor owed to them, not by them)

Director cue: A "clean win" should usually grant at least one form of leverage.

Quick Encounter Templates

Use these to generate scenes instantly.

Template A: Road Interception

- **Goal:** identification and control
- **Clock:** Exposure/Attention (6)
- **Choice:** talk, hide, detour, push through
- **Cost on Lesser Win:** name recorded, toll paid, watched

Template B: Hedge Ambush

- **Goal:** robbery or capture
- **Clock:** Pursuit Closing (4–6)
- **Choice:** fight, flee, bargain, misdirect
- **Cost on Lesser Win:** gear lost, minor wound, scent trail established

Template C: Sanctuary Test

- **Goal:** determine if you're safe to help
- **Clock:** Hospitality Strain (4–8)
- **Choice:** offer proof, accept terms, swear a small oath, leave
- **Cost on Lesser Win:** favor owed, watch assigned, limited access

Template D: Fomorian Take

- **Goal:** seize someone or something and vanish
- **Clock:** Capture Closing (4–6)
- **Choice:** prevent separation, sacrifice gear, call help, chase
- **Cost on Lesser Win:** someone wounded, route compromised, pursuit begins

CHAPTER 29: BESTIARY & ADVERSARIES

This chapter gives you **ready adversary entries** in a consistent format, tuned for duet play: most conflicts should be **1–3 Antagonists** plus terrain, weather, witnesses, or a Clock that adds pressure. Don't over-roll. If an enemy's action is trivial, resolve it as a Light harm or a narrative cost on a failed defense and keep the scene moving.

UNIVERSAL CREATURE STAT LINE (use for every entry)

Creature — Threat (1–5), Defense (avoidance), DR, Wounds/Hull, Attacks, Traits

- **Threat** is a fast dial: 1 = nuisance, 3 = serious fight, 5 = boss-tier.
- **Defense** is a fixed % (dodge/parry/avoidance) or an Attribute benchmark if you prefer.
- **Wounds/Hull** is "how many meaningful hits" it can take (use your core Wound logic; treat this as durability).

Adar Llwch Gwin (Ashen Wind-Beast)

Threat 4, Defense 55%, DR 2, Wounds 5
Attacks: Claw-Gust 60% (1d10), Suffocating Cloud (Director; usually Disadvantage to next action)
Traits: Flight; Blinding Ash (–10/–20 visibility zone); Hates open flame (Director may grant Advantage against it when fire is used well)

An adar llwch gwin is less "bird" than **storm given hunger**—a winged, soot-colored bulk whose feathers look like shredded char. It moves like a sudden squall through hollows and ruined places, where old fires died badly and the air remembers smoke. When it strikes, it does not always kill; it **steals breath** and turns direction into confusion, making pursuers lose the line and victims stumble into ditches. Gaels whisper that these things follow armies and burnings, feeding on the aftertaste of violence. The Sídhe treat an adar as an omen: if you see ash moving against the wind, you're already late. Sanctuaries sometimes hang wet cloth and keep a steady flame precisely to deny it a comfortable hunting ground.

Adoru (Doroo)

Threat 3, Defense 45%, DR 1, Wounds 4
Attacks: Needle-Teeth 55% (1d8), Panic Nibble (Director; on strong hit, target suffers Disadvantage on their next calm/social action)
Traits: Burrower; Night-Click Lure (AWR tests at –10 if exhausted); Skittish (breaks off if bloodied)

An adoru is a **burrowing, dog-sized "wrong thing"**—pale hide stretched tight, eyes like wet stones, teeth too fine and too many. It lives in old barrows, collapsed stone walls, and the undersides of sanctuaries that have been abandoned and reoccupied. Doroo are not noble monsters; they're **opportunists** that nip at ankles, steal small items, and panic the unwary into mistakes that bigger predators exploit. They often trail Fomorian scouting parties because doroo thrive on scraps and fear. The People say doroo can sense when someone is about to run—and they bite precisely then. Killing one is easy compared to the trouble it causes: if you let it live, it may lead something worse back to your scent.

Anjana

Threat 3, Defense 55%, DR 1, Wounds 3
Attacks: Lure-Touch 60% (—), Silvered Nails 45% (1d6)
Traits: Glamour Presence (often grants Disadvantage to hostile intent unless proof/witness breaks it); Water-Blessing (Director; can cleanse minor taint); Bound to a place (weak if forced far from its spring)

An anjana appears as a **radiant woman of the waters**, hair like riverlight and eyes too calm for mortal fear. In Éire, they are rare visitors from older stories—sometimes attached to a spring, ford, or hidden pool that predates the courts. They do not "cast spells" like a mage; they **change the terms of a scene**—turning anger into hesitation, turning suspicion into an offer of water, turning cruelty into shame. Gaels may mistake an anjana for a saintly apparition, which can be dangerous when zeal turns to capture. Sídhe treat them carefully, because an anjana's gifts come with implied obligation: you do not drink and then betray. When an anjana is forced into violence, it is quick and precise, but its true threat is how it makes people forget what they came to do.

Bandit

Threat 2, Defense 40%, DR 1–2, Wounds 2
Attacks: Blade 45% (1d6) or Bow 40% (1d6)
Traits: Cowardly unless leader present; Ambush-minded (+10 when unseen); Flees if clearly outmatched

Bandits in Éire are rarely romantic highwaymen; they are hungry men with knives, wet cloaks, and excuses that sound convincing until you're on the ground. They haunt narrow roads, old hedges, and ford-crossings where carts must slow and travelers must choose between mud and water. Many are displaced by war, famine, or lordly "corrections," which makes them easy to pity and hard to trust. Bandits prefer **fast wins**—threats, sudden violence, and then running before soldiers arrive—so they often create **Exposure/Attention** pressure as collateral. Sídhe consider them dangerous not for their skill but for their unpredictability: a frightened bandit can do a cruel thing just to feel powerful for one breath. Use bandits to make travel costly and to force social choices: pay, bargain, intimidate, or risk escalation.

Bandit Captain

Threat 3, Defense 55%, DR 2–3, Wounds 4
Attacks: Blade 60% (1d8), Command
Traits: Orders allies (+10 to their next roll if obeyed); Knows the road; Leaves survivors to spread fear (ticks Exposure)

A bandit captain is what happens when desperation becomes policy: confident stance, practiced lies, and the ability to make lesser predators act like a pack. They usually have a reason they repeat—wronged by a lord, starving family, betrayed by soldiers—and even if it's true, they've built a world where **your suffering is the solution**. Captains tend to control chokepoints: a bridge, a hedge lane, the only safe ford in a stretch, turning travel into negotiation under duress. They keep scouts and watchers, making it harder to slip away cleanly and easier for a Lesser Win to tick **Pursuit** or **Exposure** Clocks. Some captains are surprisingly courteous—because courtesy is another kind of knife—and will offer "terms" that sound fair until you realize the cost later. Use a captain when you want a recurring human antagonist who can evolve into politics: paid off, recruited, hunted, or used by a rival court.

Bánánach

Threat 4, Defense 50%, DR 2, Wounds 5
Attacks: Terror-Howl 60% (—; Director inflicts Disadvantage or forces retreat positioning), Bone-Club 55% (1d10)
Traits: Battlefield Omen; Fear-Feeding (gains +10 when targets are panicked); Cannot be bribed (only driven off, outwitted, or bound)

A bánánach is a **war-spirit made visible**—a towering figure with ragged hair, grey skin, and a presence that turns courage sour. It haunts places where slaughter soaked into the ground and where the dead were not properly honored. Unlike a wraith, it is not merely the restless dead; it is the **memory of violence** given appetite and body. Its howl is not just loud—it is socially disruptive, turning a confident group into individuals making private survival choices. Fir Bolg remnants sometimes paint ward-marks to keep one from settling near their holds. When the bánánach appears in a campaign, treat it as a sign that the island is pushing back against "modern" intrusion with ancient teeth.

Banshee (Bean Sídhe)

Threat 3, Defense 60%, DR 1, Wounds 3
Attacks: Wail 65% (—; Director imposes Disadvantage and/or ticks Exposure/Attention), Chill-Grip 50% (1d6)
Traits: Harbinger (arrives before death); Cannot be easily harmed by mundane weapons; Bound to bloodlines (drawn to certain families and oaths)

A bean sídhe is not a random monster—it is a **family doom-witness**, a thin, pale figure whose hair streams like wet grass and whose eyes have cried themselves into something inhuman. Its wail is the real weapon: it turns hearts to water and makes even brave people act like prey, often causing stampedes, mistakes, and self-inflicted tragedy. In Éire, a banshee may attach to an old Gael line, a court's dying branch, or a Fir Bolg survivor band whose lineage still matters to the land. The Sídhe do not "hunt" a bean sídhe; they negotiate, placate, or interpret—because its presence means something is already in motion. A Director can use a banshee as a warning that a Clock is near completion, or as a rival court's omen leveraged socially. If forced into direct harm, it prefers cold touch and breath-stealing rather than gore.

Boar

Threat 2, Defense 35%, DR 1, Wounds 3
Attacks: Tusk 45% (1d8), Charge (Director; on strong hit, knockdown/drive-back)
Traits: Relentless; ignores first "scare-off" attempt

Éire's boars are thick-shouldered and scarred, moving through bracken like living boulders. They are common enough to be hunted, but dangerous enough that an overconfident hunter ends up bleeding in mud. A boar fight is rarely heroic—more often it's a sudden **explosion of muscle** in a hedge gap, followed by chaos and slipping footing. Sídhe Hostborn treat boars with wary respect because they are stubborn in a way that resembles old oaths. Gael villagers fear the "big tusker" that learns human routes and ambushes carts near dusk. When you use boars, make the terrain part of the threat: ditches, roots, and narrow gaps that punish bad positioning.

Brownie

Threat 2, Defense 55%, DR 1, Wounds 2
Attacks: Hearth-Flick 50% (1d6), Trip-and-Tangle 55% (—; Director imposes positional Disadvantage)
Traits: Household Bound; Rewards courtesy; Vengeful if mocked (Clock: Household Turns Hostile)

A brownie is a small, wiry household fae—mud-brown skin, bright eyes, hair like teased wool—who belongs to a place more than a court. In Éire they appear around long-used hearths, old mills, and sanctuaries that still keep proper offerings of cream or bread crust. Brownies are not "cute helpers"; they are **standards-enforcers**—quietly fixing what they approve of and quietly sabotaging what offends them. If respected, a brownie can keep a camp functional: straps mended, small tools found, fires coaxed. If insulted or laughed at, it becomes a nuisance with teeth—knots slipping, water spoiled, and embarrassing noises at the worst moment. For Directors, brownies are perfect for social pressure Clocks: your comfort depends on your courtesy.

Bugbear

Threat 4, Defense 45%, DR 2, Wounds 6
Attacks: Heavy Claw 60% (1d10), Sack-Drag (Director; on strong hit, target is grabbed/relocated)
Traits: Ambush Predator; Fear-Scent (gains +10 against isolated prey); Night-Hunter

Bugbears in *The Fading* are hulking, long-limbed brutes wrapped in matted fur and old rags, with hands too big and eyes too patient. They favor hedgerows, ruins, and foggy woods where distance collapses and a single mistake becomes capture. Unlike a werewolf, a bugbear is not a curse—it is a **predator with habits**, and it learns routines: which path is taken, which ford is used, which sanctuary gate is checked at night. Gaels tell stories of "the sack-man" to keep children close; the Sídhe take the threat seriously because bugbears specialize in **separating** a Protagonist from a Companion. In combat, the bugbear's damage is less important than its control: dragging someone into reeds, behind stones, or into darkness. Use it when you want a chase to turn into a close, breathy struggle.

Changeling

Threat 2, Defense 50%, DR 0, Wounds 2
Attacks: Needle-Strike 45% (1d6), Borrowed Voice 60% (—; Director creates confusion/Exposure tick)
Traits: False Familiarity (often grants Advantage to infiltration); Breaks under witness (courtesy, proof, or sanctuary ritual); Unstable Identity (may flee if confronted cleanly)

A changeling is a **replacement story made flesh**—a fae thing wearing the shape, habits, and voice of someone it is not. In Éire, changelings are weaponized grief: families accept what they want to be true, and courts exploit that weakness when subtle sabotage is needed. Physically, a changeling often has tiny tells: eyes too reflective, fingers too cold, a laugh that arrives a beat late. It does not need to be "evil" to be dangerous; its existence creates social fractures and makes communities doubt their own senses. Gaels may respond with cruelty—tests, iron, fire—creating moral crises that Directors can lean on hard. In play, changelings shine as **Exposure/Attention** engines: even a win can leave a family shattered.

Chieftain (Gael)

Threat 3, Defense 50%, DR 2–3, Wounds 4
Attacks: Blade/Spear 60% (1d8), Command 65% (—; Director shifts crowd/warband positioning)

Traits: Local Authority; Retainers nearby (ticks Pursuit/Exposure); Proud reputation (hard to publicly shame without proof)

A Gael chieftain is power made personal: a name that carries, a household that obeys, and a reputation that can close a road as effectively as a fallen tree. Chieftains are rarely alone—there is always a cousin, a sworn spear, a messenger, or a priest who can turn a private insult into public cause. They dress better than their people but not softly: wool, leather, and iron that signals "I can afford violence." Some chieftains are pragmatic and will trade peace for advantage; others are zealots who see the uncanny as a threat to be contained. For Sídhe, chieftains are dangerous because they can make **policy** out of fear—bounties, patrols, burnings, and public tests. Use a chieftain when you want an antagonist whose "attacks" are mostly social and logistical, and whose defeat is more likely to be political than bloody.

Common Man (Gael)

Threat 1, Defense 30%, DR 0–1, Wounds 2
Attacks: Knife/Club 35% (1d6), Stone 30% (1d4)
Traits: Fearful of the uncanny; Will run if blood is spilled; Calls for help (ticks Exposure/Attention)

Most Gaels the Protagonist meets are not warriors—farmers, fishers, herders, and traders who measure risk by winter survival. They dress in wool and rough linen, carry simple knives, and know the land by necessity rather than romance. A common man can become dangerous in numbers, especially when fear turns into certainty and certainty turns into a mob. Many have iron nails, tools, or charms close at hand, which can be uncomfortable for Sídhe even if no one intends harm. Socially, common folk are often your **best source of rumor and routes**—and your worst source of Exposure if you handle them poorly. Use them frequently: they make the setting feel alive, and they make courtesy matter.

Cù-Sìdhe (Fae Hound)

Threat 4, Defense 60%, DR 2, Wounds 5
Attacks: Spectral Bite 65% (1d10), Baying Doom (Director; Disadvantage and/or Pursuit Clock tick)
Traits: Unnerving Presence; Tracks by name/scent; Won't cross true guest-right marks unless compelled by higher power

The cù-sìdhe is the court's hunting dog made myth—huge, dark-furred, eyes like lantern coals, paws that make no sound until they choose to. It appears in mist and on the edges of sanctuaries when someone has broken a rule that courts take personally. Unlike wolves, it doesn't hunt for food; it hunts for **judgment**, and its bay can make even hardened fighters feel like a child in tall grass. Gaels often mistake it for a demon-hound and respond with iron and prayer, which can escalate scenes quickly. For Sídhe, the cù-sìdhe is political: if it's on your trail, someone with authority wants you found—not necessarily killed. Use it as a relentless pressure tool: a Pursuit Clock with teeth.

Dearg Due

Threat 4, Defense 55%, DR 2, Wounds 4
Attacks: Bite 60% (1d10), Kiss of Drain (Director; on strong hit, target suffers fatigue/exhaustion consequence)
Traits: Nightbound; Stilled by proper burial rites; Charm-Gaze (often Disadvantage to resist close contact if alone)

The dearg due is a revenant-vampire of Irish tale: beautiful in a way that feels like a trap, skin pale as milk, lips stained too red, eyes full of hungry patience. It is born from cruelty—an abused bride, a wronged noblewoman, a buried truth—and it hunts not random victims but the **shape of its own story** repeated in others. In Éire it is as much social weapon as monster; it enters halls by invitation, rides rumor like a horse, and chooses victims whose disappearance will damage a community. The Sídhe fear it because it turns hospitality into vulnerability, and the Gaels fear it because it makes their moral certainty look childish. A dearg due encounter should feel like dread and seduction tangled together, with consequences that linger after the fight. It is rarely "killed" in the moment; it is solved by rites, witness, and decisive refusal.

Dire Wolf

Threat 3, Defense 55%, DR 1, Wounds 4
Attacks: Bite 55% (1d10), Maul (Director; on strong hit, knockdown or gear-tear)
Traits: Fear in peasants (+10 Intimidation when present);

Pack Anchor (+10 to nearby wolves' pressure); Won't break easily

A dire wolf is a wolf shaped by older hunger—bigger shoulders, heavier jaw, scars that suggest it has fought steel and lived. In Éire, dire wolves are often tied to places where the wild still has authority: deep woods, forgotten hills, and routes that courts avoid at certain seasons. Gaels fear them as omens and will sometimes abandon a road entirely after a dire wolf sighting. Sídhe treat them with a cautious respect, especially if Beastpact stories are present, because dire wolves can feel like **agents of the land** rather than random animals. A dire wolf fight should emphasize weight and control: it doesn't need to out-damage the Protagonist; it needs to knock them down and hold them long enough for the pack—or the terrain—to finish the job. Use dire wolves to make the wild feel mythic without introducing "dragon-tier" spectacle.

Dobhar-Chú

Threat 4, Defense 50%, DR 2, Wounds 6
Attacks: Mauling Bite 60% (1d12), Water-Drag (Director; on strong hit, target is pulled toward water/loses footing)
Traits: Amphibious; Territorial; Blood-Scent Frenzy (+10 once wounded prey bleeds)

A dobhar-chú is a monstrous hound-otter—sleek, black, and massive—whose body moves with wet power and whose eyes feel too intelligent for an animal. It favors deep lakes, shadowed rivers, and old pools near sanctuaries that have been forgotten or violated. Gaels tell stories of it as a killer that drags people under; Sídhe stories are older and stranger, claiming it is a guardian twisted by rot or by broken courtesy. Its fur sheds water like oil, and its teeth are built for gripping and **not letting go**. A dobhar-chú fight is about footing and breath: stones slick, reeds grabbing legs, cold water turning panic into death. Use it when you want travel to become an immediate crisis and the environment to do half the work.

Dullahan

Threat 5, Defense 60%, DR 3, Wounds 7
Attacks: Whip/Flail 65% (1d12), Headless Gaze (Director; strong hit may impose terror/forced retreat)
Traits: Mounted Horror; Cannot be bribed; Names the doomed (Clock trigger); Stops doors (thresholds resist it poorly)

A dullahan is a headless rider—armor blackened, cloak streaming, carrying its own severed head like a lantern of pale light. Where it rides, animals panic, lamps gutter, and even brave people feel the urge to hide as if hiding could erase fate. In *The Fading*, a dullahan is not an everyday enemy; it is a **boss-tier omen** that should arrive when a major Clock nears completion or a terrible debt comes due. Gaels see it as death's messenger; the Sídhe see it as a force that courts sometimes try (and fail) to bargain with. The dullahan's threat is not only combat damage; it is certainty—when it calls a name, the scene's stakes become absolute. Use it sparingly, and make the aftermath echo for sessions.

Elf Cat (Cait Sìth)

Threat 3, Defense 60%, DR 1, Wounds 3
Attacks: Shadow-Pounce 60% (1d8), Soul-Snatch (Director; if victim is helpless, risk escalates)
Traits: Night Stalker; Steals breath (–10 to calm actions nearby); Distractible by proper offerings

The cait sìth is a large, black cat with a white blaze and eyes like coins held in candlelight. It appears at wakes, near lonely roads, and around sanctuaries where death has recently passed—watching like a patient thief. Gaels fear it will steal a soul if it crosses the corpse; Sídhe know the cat is drawn to **unsettled transitions**, not just bodies. In play, the elf cat is perfect for eerie pressure: it can stalk without attacking, creating dread and forcing choices about watch, fire, and offerings. When it fights, it's fast and quiet, preferring sudden pounces that isolate prey. It can be driven off with correct forms—milk, warmth, and respectful refusal—making it a great courtesy test in disguise.

Fairy, Tiny Winged (Common "Flower-Folk")

Threat 1, Defense 60%, DR 0, Wounds 1
Attacks: Needle-Prick 45% (1d4), Dust-Flash 55% (—; Director imposes –10/Disadvantage briefly)
Traits: Swarm Nuisance (+10 when 3+ act together); Vain; Easily bargained with; Hates iron filings

Tiny winged fairies in Éire are not the rulers of courts; they are the **small citizens of hedge and blossom**, bright-

winged, sharp-tongued, and endlessly curious. They gather where food is sweet, music is played, or someone bleeds—because strong emotion tastes like honey to them. Most are nuisances rather than killers: they steal buttons, undo knots, whisper lies, and make torches sputter at the worst moment. They can, however, ruin stealth and trigger Exposure Clocks by laughing at exactly the wrong time. Sídhe often tolerate them as part of the land's living texture, but will punish them for serious breaches of courtesy. Use them to complicate scenes without turning them into fights—unless the Protagonist makes them an enemy.

Fear Gorta

Threat 3, Defense 45%, DR 1, Wounds 4
Attacks: Hunger Touch 55% (—; Director inflicts fatigue/supply strain), Beggar's Clutch 45% (1d6)
Traits: Starvation Aura (ticks Supply Strain); Weak to true generosity; Drawn to hoarding and broken hospitality

The fear gorta is hunger given a face: a gaunt beggar-figure with skin tight on bone and eyes too old for its body. It appears on roads in lean seasons, near failed harvests, or at the edges of sanctuaries when hospitality has been repeatedly refused. It is not merely "a monster that attacks"—it is a moral engine that forces choices: do you give when you have little, or do you harden and pay the island's price? Gaels sometimes respond with cruelty and regret; Sídhe respond with wary courtesy, because hunger is one of the oldest curses on the island. In play, the fear gorta is excellent for pressure: it ticks Supply Strain, it makes Endurance scenes harder, and it leaves the Protagonist feeling hollow even after a win. If treated correctly—with real food, real warmth, and a sincere act—it may pass without violence.

Fir Bolg Border-Warden

Threat 3, Defense 50%, DR 2, Wounds 4
Attacks: Sling 55% (1d6), Stone Axe 50% (1d8)
Traits: Terrain Mastery (+10 in hills/bog edges); Hard Bargainers; Not easily intimidated

A Fir Bolg border-warden is built like a working wall—broad, scarred, practical—wrapped in hides and tough cloth, carrying tools that double as weapons. These are not raiders by nature; they are survivors who keep boundaries because boundaries are what remain when empires come. They know where bog becomes solid, where stone hides a safe path, and where a cart will break if pushed too hard. Many distrust courts and sanctuaries equally, viewing Sídhe politics as a luxury that ended long ago. In play, border-wardens are best used as **social-and-terrain opponents**: they don't need to kill you, they need to make you leave—or pay. If the Protagonist treats them with dignity and honest trade, they can become powerful, blunt allies.

Fomorian Ironbinder

Threat 4, Defense 45%, DR 3, Wounds 5
Attacks: Iron Hook-Chain 60% (1d10), Nail-Curse 55% (—; Director imposes Disadvantage on Sídhe actions for 1 exchange or ticks a Magick/Composure Clock)
Traits: Iron-Heavy (often imposes Disadvantage on Sídhe composure/magick nearby); Captor's Craft; Breaks thresholds (treats simple barriers as trivial)

An Ironbinder is a Fomorian specialist who carries iron like a priest carries scripture—chains, nails, hooks, and shackles that look hand-made and lovingly maintained. They are used when raiders want captives intact, when courts must be humiliated, or when a sanctuary must be made "unsafe" without burning it. To a Sídhe, the Ironbinder's presence is nausea and pressure: iron smell, iron touch, and the instinct to recoil even before the first strike. Gaels who witness an Ironbinder often interpret the scene through superstition, which can escalate Exposure and panic. Ironbinders are not necessarily sorcerers; their "workings" are cruel craft—binding joints, pinning cloaks to doors, nailing tokens to trees so the land remembers your failure. Use them as mid-to-boss antagonists who turn every exchange into a choice between escape and rescue.

Fomorian Raider (Common Type)

Threat 3, Defense 45%, DR 2, Wounds 4
Attacks: Hook-Spear 55% (1d10), Net-Drag 50% (—; Director restrains/relocates on strong hit)
Traits: Capture Focus; Cruelty as tactic; Iron-Heavy (often imposes Disadvantage on Sídhe composure/magick nearby)

A common Fomorian raider is thick-limbed and brutal, wearing scavenged armor and iron hooks that clink like warning bells. They favor coastlines, river mouths, and any

route where victims can be dragged away before help arrives. Fomorians rarely fight "fair"—they fight to **take**, and their first move is usually to separate a target from allies, block retreat, or force a fall. Their presence changes the whole scene for Sídhe: iron smell, iron touch, and the cultural memory of old defeats rising in the throat. Use raiders with a Capture or Pursuit Clock; even a Protagonist "win" should often cost gear, time, or safety. When they retreat, they do it laughing—because fear is part of the loot.

Fox

Threat 1, Defense 55%, DR 0, Wounds 1
Attacks: Snap 35% (1d4)
Traits: Skittish; Clever; Omen Animal (Director may use it to signal nearby watchers or court attention)

Foxes in Éire are common and quick, red or grey depending on the land, always watching from the edge of torchlight. They are not a combat threat, but they are a **story threat**: they lead hunters astray, appear before ambushes, and seem to know when the Protagonist is being watched. Sídhe often read fox behavior as a hint from the land—if a fox follows you too closely, something else may be following you as well. Gaels treat foxes as thieves and omens, sometimes blaming them for misfortune that has other causes. Use foxes as gentle pressure: a signal that your stealth is imperfect, or that a sanctuary's spirit is curious. If a fox becomes unusually bold, consider it a sign of puca influence or court interest.

Ghoul

Threat 3, Defense 50%, DR 1, Wounds 4
Attacks: Claws 55% (1d6), Paralysis on strong hit (Director)
Traits: Stench (–10 to social composure nearby); Grave-Hungry; Drawn to fresh blood

Ghouls are carrion-things that prefer edges: graveyards, battlefields, barrows, and places where bodies were left without proper rites. They move with hungry impatience, limbs slightly wrong, mouths that never quite close. In Éire, ghouls often follow human conflict—Gael raids, Fomorian attacks—because the dead draw them like smoke draws flies. Sídhe fear them not because they are clever, but because they are **persistent** and hard to shame or bargain with. Their paralysis is less "magic" than a sudden seizing cold that steals action and makes escape fail at the wrong instant. Use ghouls when you want the aftermath of violence to become its own new problem.

Gnomes

Threat 2, Defense 55%, DR 1, Wounds 2
Attacks: Stone-Hammer 45% (1d6), Burrow-Snare 55% (—; Director trips/restrains briefly)
Traits: Underground Sense (+10 to ambush/avoidance in tunnels); Craft-Fixers; Distrust iron theft

Gnomes in *The Fading* are small earth-folk: dense bodies, broad hands, eyes like polished stone, and voices like gravel under water. They appear near old mines, cairns, and hidden workshops where Sídhe craft once mingled with older earth-practices. Most gnomes are not hostile, but they are territorial and deeply suspicious of outsiders who take without asking—especially metal and tools. In play, gnomes are excellent for **resource and access scenes**: they can repair gear, offer hidden routes, or demand payment in strange currencies (stories, favors, correctly spoken names). If angered, they fight by changing footing—snaring ankles, collapsing loose stone, making tunnels wrong. They rarely pursue far; they prefer to win by making you leave.

Goblin

GThreat 2, Defense 45%, DR 1, Wounds 2
Attacks: Shiv 45% (1d6), Sling 40% (1d4)
Traits: Cowardly in open ground; Packs in tight places (+10 when 2+); Loves iron scraps

Goblins are the small scavengers of conflict—sharp-faced, quick-handed, and always present where people have recently failed. In Éire they infest ruins, old earthworks, and the edges of Fomorian camps, feeding on leftovers and opportunism. They are not mighty, but they are irritatingly good at stealing the one item that makes survival possible: rope, oil, a boot, a token. Gaels hate them as vermin; Sídhe hate them because goblins break courtesy without even understanding it. Goblins fight when they think they can win fast, and flee the moment the balance shifts. Use them as a "pressure chorus" around a larger threat or as a quick scene that costs supplies.

Hawk

Threat 1, Defense 60%, DR 0, Wounds 1
Attacks: Talons 35% (1d4)
Traits: Keen Sight (Director may grant it Advantage to notice); Omen of pursuit; Won't fight to the death

Hawks in Éire ride the wind over fields and coasts, watching everything that moves. They are not a serious combatant against a Protagonist, but they are a **narrative threat** because they turn stealth into uncertainty—especially when trained by hunters or watched by omen-readers. A hawk's shadow can be used as a warning that a patrol is nearby or that a rival court has taken interest. Sídhe sometimes treat a hawk as a messenger of the land, especially when it behaves strangely—circling too low or calling at the wrong time. Gaels may use hawks for hunting and as status symbols; seeing one where no lord should be is itself a clue. Use hawks to seed the next scene: the Protagonist can ignore the sign, but the island won't.

Hobgoblin

Threat 3, Defense 55%, DR 2, Wounds 4
Attacks: Spear/Blade 60% (1d8), Shield Bash 50% (1d6)
Traits: Disciplined; Holds formation (+10 when defending a choke); Proud (can be baited into duels)

Hobgoblins are goblinkind hardened into soldiers—taller, broader, armored, and organized enough to be genuinely dangerous. In Éire, hobgoblins often serve as mercenaries, ruin-guards, or Fomorian auxiliaries who have learned that fear is easier when it's orderly. They fight with discipline, using spear points and shields to turn a narrow path into a wall. Gaels sometimes hire them in desperate times and regret it later, because hobgoblins don't forget insults and don't surrender easily. Sídhe find them maddening: hobgoblins respect strength, but not courtesy, and their pride makes negotiation volatile. Use hobgoblins to make a "small group" feel like an army without adding bodies.

Kelpie

Threat 4, Defense 55%, DR 2, Wounds 5
Attacks: Drown-Drag 60% (1d10), Hoof/Headbutt 50% (1d8)
Traits: Waterbound; Shape-Lure (often Advantage to deceive near water); Sticky Hide (grapples become worse near its pool)

A kelpie is a water-horse: sleek and black, mane dripping, eyes too clever, skin that feels wrong under the hand. It appears near rivers and lakes as a temptingly calm mount, often with tack that seems conveniently present—because it wants you to climb on. Its true weapon is not damage; it is **commitment**: once you accept the ride, the kelpie tries to make the water inevitable. Gaels warn children, but adults still fall for it when desperate to cross quickly. Sídhe treat kelpies as dangerous neighbors—sometimes bargained with, sometimes bound by old agreements, rarely trusted. Use a kelpie as a travel pivot: the scene becomes about refusal, witness, and staying out of the waterline.

Knocker

Threat 2, Defense 55%, DR 1, Wounds 2
Attacks: Rock-Throw 45% (1d6), Cave-Shift 55% (—; Director inflicts separation/Disadvantage)
Traits: Mine/Cliff Bound; Warns before disaster (if respected); Vengeful prankster if ignored

Knockers are small, earth-dwelling fae associated with mines, cliffs, and unstable stonework—wiry bodies, bright eyes, and hands like chisels. In Éire, a knocker might live in an old passage beneath a sanctuary or in coastal caves used by smugglers and raiders. If treated respectfully—offerings, acknowledgment, not stealing tools—knockers can function as living warning systems. If mocked or ignored, they become hazards: rocks fall, ropes snag, the wrong tunnel "looks right." They are perfect for Directors who want environmental threats with personality rather than random accidents.

Knight (Gael)

Threat 3, Defense 55%, DR 4–6, Wounds 4
Attacks: Longsword 65% (1d8) or Mace 60% (1d8), Mounted Charge (Director; on strong hit, drive-back/knockdown)
Traits: Armored Presence (+10 to intimidation in court);

Iron-heavy kit; Bound by lordly duty (can be leveraged socially)

A Gael knight is not just a better soldier; he is a **social instrument of conquest** wrapped in metal, oath, and entitlement. His armor is loud in narrow lanes, his iron is constant, and his confidence comes from being backed by law and household force. Some knights are honorable and can be reasoned with through proof and witness; others are cruel because cruelty is rewarded. To the Sídhe, a knight's presence is uniquely hostile: iron close, authority assumed, and the expectation that the uncanny must kneel or be contained. Knights turn small incidents into larger ones—an insult becomes a feud, a rumor becomes a warrant, a single dead retainer becomes a raid. Use knights when you want an encounter that is half combat and half politics, where the aftermath matters as much as the blade-work.

Kobold

Threat 2, Defense 45%, DR 1, Wounds 2
Attacks: Pick/Knife 45% (1d6), Trap-Assist (Director; strong hit may impose immediate complication)
Traits: Trapmakers (+10 when fighting in prepared ground); Tunnelers; Will bargain for shiny scraps

Kobolds are small tunnel-folk with sharp features and the constant alertness of prey that learned to bite first. In Éire, they often cluster near old earthworks, cairns, and places where hidden routes cut under hills. They are not brave in open combat, but they are **brilliantly irritating** when they control the ground: snares, pits, trip-lines, and false trails. Gaels treat them as pests and occasionally as superstitious "spirits of bad luck," while Sídhe sometimes hire them to maintain secret passages—carefully, because kobolds are fickle. In play, kobolds are best used as a short, tense puzzle-fight: the Protagonist wins by noticing, not by trading damage. If you want a chase to feel clever, kobolds make the route itself the enemy.

Leanan Sídhe

Threat 3, Defense 60%, DR 1, Wounds 3
Attacks: Inspiration Drain 65% (—; Director inflicts exhaustion/obsession consequence), Nail-Scratch 45% (1d6)
Traits: Muse-Bond (targets artists/poets/ambitious hearts); Social Predator; Leaves beautiful ruin

A leanan sídhe is a muse that eats you: alluring, patient, and devastatingly attentive in exactly the way lonely people crave. It does not need to win a fight; it wins by becoming the center of a person's choices until everything else is sacrificed. In Éire, leanan sídhe often attach to bards, scribes, young knights, or Sídhe who feel their court fading and want to be remembered. Its gifts are real—clarity, creativity, boldness—but the cost accumulates as exhaustion, obsession, and broken ties. Gaels may call it a demon; Sídhe recognize it as an old court danger that can ruin diplomacy more cleanly than any blade. Use a leanan sídhe as a long-form social threat Clock rather than a single combat encounter.

Leprechaun

Threat 2, Defense 65%, DR 0, Wounds 2
Attacks: Hammer-Whack 45% (1d6), Trick-Deal 60% (—; Director imposes social complication)
Traits: Uncanny Escape; Bargain-Addict; Hoard-Sense (finds valuables)

Leprechauns in *The Fading* are solitary craft-fae—small, sharp-faced, dressed in battered finery, smelling of leather, smoke, and old coin. They are not harmless; they are **contractual predators**, thriving on hasty promises and greedy assumptions. A leprechaun may genuinely repair a thing beautifully, then demand payment in a form that stings later: a secret, a favor, a name spoken under witness. Gaels hunt them for myths of gold and usually end up humiliated or worse; Sídhe treat them like dangerous artisans whose "help" must be carefully framed. In play, leprechauns are best as temptation engines: the Protagonist can win benefits, but risks ticking Oath Debt or Exposure Clocks. If threatened, a leprechaun fights dirty and vanishes.

Merrow

Threat 3, Defense 55%, DR 1, Wounds 4
Attacks: Harpoon/Knife 55% (1d8), Undertow Pull (Director; reposition toward water)
Traits: Amphibious; Knows coastal routes; Bargains for drink and shiny things

Merrow are sea-folk: greenish skin, webbed hands, hair like seaweed, and eyes that reflect moonlight oddly. They live along the coasts and in underwater caves, sometimes

trading with smugglers and sometimes taking what they want from shipwrecks. In Éire, merrow encounters are rarely pure combat—they're **negotiations with teeth**, where the sea itself is the leverage. A merrow may offer passage, information, or salvage in exchange for liquor, metal trinkets, or a favor that will matter later. Gaels fear them as drowners; Sídhe respect them as another fading people with their own harsh politics. Use merrow when you want travel to shift from land pressure to sea pressure, with bargains that complicate later.

Nixie

Threat 2, Defense 60%, DR 0, Wounds 2
Attacks: Water-Charm 60% (—; Director lures/halts), Drown-Prick 45% (1d6)
Traits: Riverbound; Music-Lure; Weak outside water's reach

A nixie is a river-spirit with a humanlike shape and a presence that feels like a song you almost remember. In Éire, nixies are attached to specific waters—fords, pools, slow bends—where they collect stories, offerings, and mistakes. They prefer **luring and bargaining** over killing, but they are quick to punish disrespect and quick to exploit desperation. Gaels may treat them as fairies to be appeased; Sídhe treat them as local powers whose "no" can close a route. Nixies are excellent for courtesy tests: do you ask permission to cross, do you offer a token, do you accept the price? If violence erupts, keep it about movement and breath rather than damage totals.

Ogre

Threat 4, Defense 35%, DR 3, Wounds 6
Attacks: Club 60% (1d12), Throw Rock 50% (1d10)
Traits: Huge; –10 to be tripped; Loud; Terrifying silhouette (often ticks Exposure if seen at distance)

Ogres in Éire are rare, but they appear where hunger and old wrongness gather—giant brutes with thick limbs, crude tools, and habits that turn routes into no-go zones. They are not subtle predators; their danger is that they make every mistake fatal by sheer weight and reach. Gaels often try to "solve" an ogre with a mob, which usually becomes a massacre unless the terrain favors the people. Sídhe prefer to avoid ogres or manipulate them into leaving, because a direct confrontation is costly and loud. An ogre's lair is often as dangerous as the creature: broken carts, bones, and stolen goods that tempt desperate travelers into bad choices. Use ogres when you want a serious fight that feels like wrestling a landslide.

Oilliphéist (Great Serpent)

Threat 5, Defense 45%, DR 4, Wounds 8
Attacks: Bite 60% (1d12), Tail Sweep 55% (1d10), Coiling Crush (Director; severe control on strong hit)
Traits: Enormous; Water/Marsh Titan; Terrifying Presence; Hard to stop—better to outwit or drive off

The oilliphéist is an enormous serpent of Irish legend—scaled like wet stone, long as a boat, moving with patient inevitability through lakes and marshes. Its arrival changes the campaign map: routes close, fishermen vanish, sanctuaries argue about whether to flee or appease. It is not a random fight; it is a **boss-tier event** that should be tied to major Clocks (Weather, Fomorian stirring, sanctuary collapse, old curses). Gaels describe it as a demon-worm; Sídhe describe it as an ancient force that sometimes sleeps until disturbed by iron and blood. Combat against it should emphasize scale: boats splinter, ground shakes, and the best "win" may be escape or driving it back to deeper water. If you want Éire to feel mythic and dangerous, the oilliphéist does it in one scene.

Pixie

Threat 1, Defense 65%, DR 0, Wounds 1
Attacks: Pinch 40% (1d4), Confusion Jinx 55% (—; Director imposes –10 briefly)
Traits: Mischief Swarm; Loves getting lost; Can mimic voices poorly

Pixies are smaller-than-fairy troublemakers: bright-eyed, fast, and prone to making every serious moment slightly worse. In *The Fading*, pixies infest hedges, cairn-fields, and old paths where travelers already risk losing their way. They are famous for "pixie-led" wandering—turning a simple route into a loop—without ever revealing themselves clearly. Gaels curse them; Sídhe sometimes bribe them with sweets or stories, but rarely trust them. In play, pixies are best used as **travel complications** and Exposure triggers rather than combatants. If attacked, they scatter and return later with louder friends.

Priest (Gael)

Threat 2, Defense 35%, DR 0–1, Wounds 2
Attacks: Staff 40% (1d6), Denunciation 55% (—; Director ticks Exposure/Attention or shifts crowd)
Traits: Authority with the faithful; Iron charms; Can turn a scene public fast

A Gael priest is a social threat more than a combatant: robes damp with weather, eyes sharp with doctrine, voice trained to carry. In Éire, priests may be local protectors, zealous hunters of the uncanny, or pragmatic brokers who want peace above purity. They often carry iron crosses, nails, or blessed tokens that can unsettle Sídhe and complicate magick scenes by positioning. A priest's real weapon is **framing**—making the Protagonist into a demon, a test, or a temptation in front of witnesses. Some priests can be negotiated with using proof, hospitality, or shared enemies; others cannot. Use priests to make social conflict matter and to turn private problems into public ones.

Púca (Pooka)

Threat 3, Defense 60%, DR 1, Wounds 4
Attacks: Kick/Bite 55% (1d10), Trick-Path 60% (—; Director forces detour/Clock tick)
Traits: Shapeshifter (animal forms); Loves bargains; Punishes arrogance; Can guide honestly (rare)

A púca is a shapeshifting trickster that most often appears as a black horse, goat, dog, or hare—with eyes too human and a grin you feel rather than see. In *The Fading*, pookas are route-breakers: they offer shortcuts that become loops, rides that become humiliations, and truths that arrive wrapped in mockery. They are not inherently malicious; they are **moral predators**, feeding on arrogance, cruelty, and certainty. Gaels tell stories of pookas to warn against traveling alone at night; Sídhe treat pookas as local powers that can be bargained with—carefully, and never with careless promises. In play, pookas shine as encounter pivots: a chase changes direction, a travel day becomes a social test, a planned ambush becomes farce with consequences. If forced into a fight, they hit hard and vanish faster.

Redcap

Threat 4, Defense 50%, DR 2, Wounds 5
Attacks: Iron Pike 60% (1d10), Hatchet 55% (1d8)
Traits: Blood-Soaked Cap; Loves cruelty; Iron-Heavy (often inflicts Disadvantage on Sídhe composure nearby); Won't flee if winning

A redcap is a murderous fae of ruined places: squat, powerful, face like a cracked stone, cap dyed with blood that never quite dries. In Éire, redcaps cling to abandoned towers, old bridges, and battle ruins where violence has "settled" into the stone. They are not subtle and they do not bargain well; their joy is making travelers afraid and then proving the fear correct. Redcaps often carry iron, which makes them especially hateful to Sídhe and especially welcome as mercenaries for darker human or Fomorian interests. When you use a redcap, make the scene tight: narrow steps, slippery stones, nowhere to run without falling. A redcap encounter should feel like a brutality test—can the Protagonist win without becoming what the ruin wants?

Revenant (Undead)

Threat 4, Defense 50%, DR 2, Wounds 5
Attacks: Grudge-Blade 60% (1d10), Unyielding Grapple 55% (—; Director restrains/denies escape)
Traits: Single Purpose; Returns unless properly resolved; Ignores fear; Hard to bribe

A revenant is a dead thing animated by **unfinished purpose**, not hunger for flesh. It looks like a corpse that never quite accepted stillness: pale, torn, eyes fixed on the one task that keeps it moving. In Éire, revenants often arise from broken oaths, betrayed hospitality, or unjust killings—especially those done under witness. They are terrifying because they don't tire, don't negotiate, and don't care about pain; they care about completion. Gaels may interpret them as divine punishment; Sídhe interpret them as a consequence that has learned to walk. In play, a revenant is best used with a clear condition for resolution: return the stolen thing, speak the truth, repair the oath, or perform proper rites.

Selkie

Threat 3, Defense 60%, DR 1, Wounds 3
Attacks: Knife 50% (1d6), Undertow Escape (Director; on win, disengage/vanish)
Traits: Two-Skin Nature (seal/human); Vulnerable if skin is stolen; Coastal knowledge

Selkies are seal-folk who can shed their skins to walk as humans—beautiful, quiet, and haunted by the pull of the sea. In Éire they appear along coasts and islands, sometimes trading, sometimes falling into tragic entanglements with humans who covet what they don't understand. A selkie is rarely an enemy by choice; threats involving selkies usually come from **theft and coercion**—someone has taken a skin, and now a life is trapped. Sídhe often sympathize because the story mirrors their own fading: identity tied to a thing that can be stolen. Gaels romanticize selkies and then commit crimes "for love." Use selkies to create moral pressure, rescue arcs, and social fallout rather than simple combat.

Shadow (Undead)

Threat 2, Defense 55%, DR 1, Wounds 3
Attacks: Chill Touch 55% (1d6), Dimming Aura (Director; −10 to next action in darkness)
Traits: Hates bright flame; Slips through gaps; Drawn to fear and isolation

A shadow is a piece of wrongness torn loose from death—flat, cold, and hungry for warmth it can't hold. It clings to corners, under bridges, and inside ruins where light fails, and it moves like a stain when no one looks directly at it. In Éire, shadows are common after battles, failed rites, and places where people died alone and unspoken. They are not clever, but they are persistent, and they make scenes feel colder than the weather should allow. Sídhe often use fire and witness rituals to keep shadows from settling near sanctuaries. Use shadows as "low-threat" undead that still create meaningful pressure through fear, darkness, and attrition of composure.

Skeleton (Undead)

Threat 2, Defense 40%, DR 2, Wounds 3
Attacks: Rusty Blade 45% (1d6)
Traits: Fearless; vulnerable to bludgeoning (+10 to hit vs it)

Skeletons are the island's simplest undead: bones animated by old power, old curses, or old negligence. In Éire they appear in barrows, ruined keeps, and places where the dead were disturbed by greed or war. They fight without fear or fatigue, making them unnerving opponents for common Gaels who expect pain to end a fight. Sídhe see skeletons as evidence that something is wrong with the land's boundaries—death isn't staying where it belongs. Skeletons are best used as **guardians of a place**, not roaming predators: they defend thresholds, hoards, and sealed doors. Keep their scenes brisk and physical—bone clatter, rust scrape, and the cold certainty of a thing that doesn't care if it breaks.

Soldier (Gael)

Threat 2, Defense 40%, DR 1–2, Wounds 3
Attacks: Spear/Blade 50% (1d8) or Bow 40% (1d6)
Traits: Follows orders; Iron gear common; Calls reinforcements (ticks Pursuit/Exposure)

Gael soldiers are trained men with practical violence: spear lines, shield discipline, and the confidence of belonging to a larger force. They wear simple armor, carry iron weapons, and often travel with dogs or scouts who turn stealth into risk. Unlike bandits, soldiers care about authority and consequences—sometimes that makes them less cruel, sometimes it makes them worse. Sídhe fear soldiers because they represent the future: organized, expanding, and increasingly certain that the uncanny must be contained. Soldiers also generate social pressure; a confrontation can become public quickly, with witnesses, records, and retaliation. Use them as patrols, escorts, and "the net tightening," not as random fight fodder.

Sorcerer

Threat 4, Defense 40%, DR 1, Wounds 3
Attacks: Spellcraft 65% (module spells), Dagger 40% (1d4)
Traits: Counterspell attempt (Director call); fragile if pinned; Loud power draws attention (ticks Exposure/Interest)

Human sorcerers in Éire are uncommon, feared, and rarely stable—individuals who clawed at the island's hidden rules and survived long enough to believe they own them. They often look ordinary until they act: soot-stained fingers, charm-bags, scarred wrists from old bindings, eyes that won't quite meet a witness stone. Some are hedge-witches serving villages; others are lord-backed specialists used to hunt the uncanny; the worst are self-taught predators who learned that fear is a spell component. Sídhe treat human sorcery as especially dangerous because it tends to be **loud**—ritual circles, iron nails, crude demands made of spirits—and loud power brings consequences. A sorcerer is rarely a stand-up duel; it's a scene of control, counters, and collateral, where a Lesser Win can still mean a new Clock started. Use sorcerers when you want a human threat that mirrors Sídhe magick while violating its courtesies.

Sprite

Threat 1, Defense 65%, DR 0, Wounds 1
Attacks: Spark-Sting 45% (1d4), Laughing Jinx 55% (—; Director imposes brief Disadvantage)
Traits: Elemental Mood (weather-linked); Curious; Flees if confronted directly

Sprites are the smallest "bright spirits" of air and weather—glints in fog, tiny figures in rainbows, laughter that arrives with wind. In Éire, sprites appear when the island's mood shifts: sudden sun after rain, fog lifting at the wrong moment, wind pushing a boat into danger. They rarely intend harm, but their curiosity can be lethal because they don't understand mortal fragility. Gaels call them blessings or curses depending on whether the day goes well. Sídhe treat them as emotional weather: you don't fight a sprite, you **ride the moment** and try not to offend it. Use sprites as small complications, omen messengers, and "the land is watching" texture.

Stag / Deer

Threat 1, Defense 50%, DR 0, Wounds 2
Attacks: Antler/Hoof 35% (1d6)
Traits: Flighty; Sacred in some places; Can lead travelers (Director tool)

Deer are common across Éire—ghost-pale in mist, brown shapes in bracken, antlers like branches held upright. They are not predators, but they can injure badly when cornered, especially in narrow hedge gaps. In Sídhe stories, stags are often **guides**—not always benevolent, but meaningful—leading a traveler toward a sanctuary, a trap, or a choice that will define them. Gaels hunt deer for survival and for status; a lord's stag hunt can change travel safety for everyone nearby. Use deer to set tone: the Protagonist sees a stag where they shouldn't, and the scene tilts toward the uncanny. If a deer behaves unnaturally—unafraid, watching—it may be a pooka's sign or a court's eye.

Werewolf of Ossory

Threat 4, Defense 55%, DR 2, Wounds 6
Attacks: Claws 65% (1d10), Bite 60% (1d12)
Traits: Blood-Rage (+10 once wounded); Night-Hunter; Human memory flickers (can be stalled by true-name/witness, Director call)

The werewolves of Ossory are not "random curse-beasts"; they are the echo of a specific, grim tradition—men who become wolves through old bargains, old sins, or inherited doom. In Éire, an Ossory werewolf is often a local horror with social roots: a village knows, a priest suspects, a lord exploits, and everyone lies to survive. Physically, it is a wolf made too large and too intelligent, with human-cunning eyes and scars that suggest it has fought steel before. Sídhe regard them with a strange caution, because the curse sits at the border between human and fae consequence. Use werewolves as stalking threats tied to Clocks—missing livestock, disappearances, and rising suspicion—rather than as one-off fights. When the Protagonist finally confronts one, make it about control and choice: stop the beast, or reveal the human and ignite the village.

Wolf (Common)

Threat 2, Defense 45%, DR 0, Wounds 2
Attacks: Bite 45% (1d6), Trip on strong hit (Director)
Traits: Pack Tactics (+10 when 2+ wolves threaten)

Wolves in Éire are not everywhere, but where they exist they shape travel: routes avoided, camps watched, and lone travelers treated as prey. A wolf looks like hunger with fur—lean, silent, patient—more likely to test than to charge. Wolves become truly dangerous in packs, where one distracts and another goes for the hamstring, turning a

confident fight into a slipping retreat. Sídhe often respect wolves as honest hunters, and some lineages treat them as sign-animals tied to Beastpact stories. Gaels fear wolves but also admire them; the line between "wolf" and "werewolf" rumor is thin in frightened communities. Use wolves to make the wild feel real and to punish careless camping without turning the campaign into a slaughterhouse.

Wolf Pack

Threat 2, Defense 45%, DR 0, Wounds 2 each
Attacks: Bite 45% (1d6), Coordinated Trip (Director; on strong hit, target is knocked down or driven into worse ground)
Traits: Pack Tactics (+10 when 2+ wolves threaten); Circle-and-Test (prefers pressure before commitment); Breaks if leader is hurt (Director call)

A wolf pack is not "one bigger wolf"—it is a moving problem that turns a straight path into a trap. You see eyes at the edge of firelight, hear padding that stops when you look, and realize you're being **managed** toward mud, water, or a narrow gap. Packs in Éire often shadow travelers for hours, waiting for fatigue, injury, or argument to create the moment they need. Gaels respond with torches and noise; Sídhe respond with steadier discipline, because panic is what the pack wants. In play, treat packs as pressure engines: they force Endurance, travel choices, and camp discipline, and they punish solitary action. A clean "win" against a pack often means driving them off with fire, posture, and decisive harm—not killing them all.

Wraith (Undead)

Threat 4, Defense 60%, DR 2, Wounds 5
Attacks: Soul-Chill 65% (1d10), Despair Wash (Director; Disadvantage and/or Clock tick: Exhaustion/Rot)
Traits: Incorporeal drift (hard to pin); Hates witness rites; Drawn to oath-breaks

A wraith is a tall, thin darkness that remembers being human only as pain and obligation. It moves like fog with intent, and its touch feels like winter inside the ribs. In Éire, wraiths are often connected to broken oaths, betrayed hospitality, and deaths that were denied proper witnessing—making them culturally resonant enemies for *The Fading*. Gaels may call them demons; Sídhe call them consequences that refused to stop. Wraith scenes should emphasize dread and erosion: courage falters, breath shortens, and the Protagonist feels the urge to flee even when winning. They are not best handled by "more damage"—they are best handled by rites, witness, and refusing the story that birthed them.

Wyvern

Threat 5, Defense 55%, DR 4, Wounds 8
Attacks: Bite 60% (1d12), Tail 55% (1d10), Venom (Director)
Traits: Flight; terror; hit-and-run

A wyvern is a living siege problem: leathery wings, barbed tail, and a reptilian hunger that treats horses and humans as equally edible. In Éire, wyverns are rare and often tied to remote cliffs, ruined coasts, or ancient places where the land's old terrors still breathe. Gaels interpret one as a divine test or a sign of approaching disaster; Sídhe interpret it as the island's refusal to become "tame." A wyvern encounter should be about terrain and timing: it strikes, retreats to height, and returns when you are off-balance. Direct pursuit is usually a mistake unless you can control the ground. Use wyverns as boss-tier threats that reshape travel routes and force alliances—because nobody fights a wyvern alone without paying dearly.

CHAPTER 30: PREGENERATED COMPANIONS

Use these companions exactly as in One-on-One: they primarily support the Protagonist through **Assist (+10)**, **Screen** (reduce Outnumbered one step), and **Anchor** (Clock control). They are *people*, *spirits*, and *beasts* under pressure—competent, flavorful, and built to keep the duet moving without stealing the spotlight.

Bran-of-the-Mist-Leash — Cù-Sídhe Court Hound

Archetype: Fae Hound / Tracker
Physical Description: A massive, black-furred hound with a faint blue sheen in moonlight; eyes like banked coals. Its breath smokes in cool air even when the night is warm, and its pawfalls are silent until it *chooses* to be heard. A thin silver cord-collar sits against the fur like a claim-mark rather than ornament.
Personality & Quirks: Loyal with a predator's patience. Hates being praised in a "pet" voice. Growls softly at iron-heavy rooms and stares too long at liars.
Role in the Duo: Pursuit control, scent-tracking, intimidation presence, and "something is wrong" warning signals.
Key Ratings (pick what matters at your table):

- Tracking 65% (scent, spoor, name-trail)
- Awareness 60% (hears breath, senses approach)
- Melee 55% (bite, shoulder-check)
- Athletics 55% (vault, drag, sprint)
- Presence 50% (ominous authority; "court hound" weight)

Signature Traits (1–3):

- **Name-Scent Hunter:** If Bran has heard a target's true name spoken (or smelled a personal token), he can justify **Assist** on Tracking/Awareness even after time or weather.
- **Silent Interposition:** When Bran **Screens**, describe a body-block, leash-snap redirect, or the sudden *appearance* of teeth—he draws one attacker's focus cleanly.
- **Iron-Aversion:** In iron-heavy scenes, Bran's actions may suffer **Disadvantage (–10 to –20)**—but his warning behavior can still **telegraph danger** for free at the Director's discretion.

Universal Companion Actions:

- **Assist (+10):** Pins a scent-line, blocks a route, signals "left—now."
- **Screen (reduce Outnumbered one step):** Body-checks an attacker away or forces them to hesitate.
- **Anchor (Clock control):** Holds a trail, slows a **Pursuit** Clock by smart route choices, or keeps a perimeter honest during rest.

Personal Gear:

- Silver-cord collar with a court-knot seal; a small bell-ring token (rung only by command); a strip of black cloth used as a "scent wrap" around a target's item.

Nessa Reedlines — Hostborn Fen-Hunter

Archetype: Scout / Bowhunter
Physical Description: Lean and mud-sure, with reed-brown hair braided tight and skin marked by old bramble-scratches. Her eyes reflect waterlight oddly in dusk. She dresses in layered greens and greys that drink fog.
Personality & Quirks: Dry humor, careful speech, distrusts easy plans. Collects small bones and ties them into "route bundles." Sleeps light, wakes angry if surprised.
Role in the Duo: Ranged support, ambush-reading, and safe travel through marsh, hedge, and ruin approaches.
Key Ratings:

- Archery 55% (shortbow, quick shots)
- Stealth 60% (hedge-shadow, reed-hiding)
- Awareness 55% (ambush signs, spacing)
- Survival 55% (routes, weather sense, safe water)
- Athletics 45% (climb, scramble, drag)

Signature Traits:

- **Fenwise:** When travel goes bad, Nessa can **Anchor** by reducing route chaos—slowing **Exposure** or **Pursuit** Clocks with practical navigation.
- **Quiet Draw:** When Nessa **Assists** an opening shot, describe a calm inhale and a clean release; if the

Protagonist was unseen, the Director should strongly consider Advantage on that first exchange.

- **Noisy Iron Sense:** Nessa isn't harmed by iron like the Sídhe are, but she *notices* it—she can call out "iron close" as a free color beat that supports caution.

Universal Companion Actions:

- **Assist (+10):** Spots a gap, calls wind shift, steadies aim, points a weak point in armor.
- **Screen (reduce Outnumbered one step):** Forces an attacker to duck or re-route with a threatening arrow line.
- **Anchor (Clock control):** Keeps watch, finds dry ground, slows travel-related Clocks with route discipline.

Personal Gear:

- Shortbow, quiver, skinning knife, reed-cord snares, small cloak-cape, charcoal for marking stones, waxed thread bundle, waterskin, simple rations.

Ailith Hearth-Hand — Hearthbound Remedy-Keeper

Archetype: Healer / Hearthkeeper
Physical Description: Sturdy, warm-eyed, with soot-stained fingers and hair that always smells faintly of smoke and herbs. Her clothes are patched with careful pride, each repair done with tiny, deliberate stitches.
Personality & Quirks: Patient until she isn't. Hums old feast tunes while working. Takes offense at waste. Will not eat until others have.
Role in the Duo: Stabilization, recovery support, morale, and "keep the camp alive" competence.
Key Ratings:

- Healing 55% (stabilize, bind, treat shock)
- Herbalism 55% (poultices, bitter teas, field remedies)
- Awareness 45% (reads bodies: fever, tremor, pain tells)
- Presence 45% (calming authority; hospitality weight)
- Endurance 50% (works through cold and fatigue)

Signature Traits:

- **Field Bandager:** When the Protagonist attempts stabilization, Ailith can **Assist** even with imperfect tools (still respecting circumstance penalties).
- **Hearth-Order:** When Ailith **Anchors**, she reduces camp errors—snuffed fires, spoiled food, missed watches—often slowing "night pressure" Clocks.
- **Stern Mercy:** Ailith can **Screen** without violence: stepping between, naming guest-right, and forcing a moment's shame.

Universal Companion Actions:

- **Assist (+10):** Holds pressure, mixes salve, talks you through pain, keeps hands steady.
- **Screen (reduce Outnumbered one step):** Creates space with authority—"Not here. Not under this roof."
- **Anchor (Clock control):** Keeps the rest cycle honest; slows "Infection," "Exhaustion," or "Pursuit" with discipline and care.

Personal Gear:

- Herbal pouch, bandage roll, bone needle, waxed thread, small clay salve jar, folding cup, flint, a soot-blackened charm-stone kept warm near her skin.

Fionnán Soft-Tongue — Court-Sídhe Hall Envoy

Archetype: Diplomat / Fixer
Physical Description: Tall and immaculate, with pale hair pinned back and eyes like polished amber. His voice is smooth—too smooth—until anger cracks it like ice. Wears layered court cloth and a token-chain of small rings that click softly when he chooses to be noticed.
Personality & Quirks: Charming, risk-aware, and privately exhausted. Keeps mental lists of debts. Never sits with his back to a door.
Role in the Duo: Social leverage, negotiation, lie-reading, and setting terms under witness.
Key Ratings:

- Persuasion 60% (terms, bargains, peace-making)
- Deception 55% (misdirection, plausible denials)
- Awareness 50% (reads posture, catches tells)

- Etiquette/Courtesy 65% (hall law, guest-right framing)
- Presence 60% (command tone, composure)
  Signature Traits:
- **Witness-Weight:** When Fionnán **Assists** in social conflict under witness (hearth/stone/well), the Director should treat his phrasing as a strong justification for Advantage.
- **Debt-Tally:** Once per scene, he can "name the cost" of an option, allowing the table to interpret consequences more clearly (a narrative clarity tool that supports Clock play).
- **Shield of Words:** When he **Screens**, it's a social interposition—stalling a fight with courtesy that makes violence costly.
  Universal Companion Actions:
- **Assist (+10):** Feeds you the right form, the right title, the right threat that isn't a threat.
- **Screen (reduce Outnumbered one step):** Redirects hostility onto himself or onto procedure.
- **Anchor (Clock control):** Slows "Alarm," "Suspicion," or "Escalation" Clocks by controlling tone and witness framing.
  Personal Gear:
- Court token-chain, wax seal kit, reed-pen and folded vellum, small mirror shard, soft gloves, a non-iron dress dagger kept mostly for ceremony.

Ciarán Under-Root — Hollowmarked Way-Runner

Archetype: Pathfinder / Smuggler
Physical Description: Narrow-faced with quick hands, dark hair cut short, and a faint pattern of scar-like lines on the wrists—old marks from thresholds that "bit back." He smells faintly of damp stone and cold wind.
Personality & Quirks: Restless, impatient with speeches, fiercely loyal once committed. Counts steps under his breath when nervous.
Role in the Duo: Getting in and out, reading doors, hiding routes, and turning "impossible access" into a plan.
Key Ratings:

- Stealth 60% (shadow travel, quiet entry)
- Thievery 55% (locks, knots, quick hands)
- Athletics 55% (climb, leap, haul)
- Awareness 50% (trip-lines, watchers, exits)
- Navigation/Routes 55% (shortcuts, safe angles)
  Signature Traits:
- **Exit-First Mind:** When Ciarán **Anchors**, he pre-plans escape—often slowing "Trapped" or "Pursuit" Clocks by keeping options open.
- **Door-Reader:** Can justify **Assist** on entry scenes by noticing hinge language, threshold wear, and "this door has been watched."
- **Shoulder Check:** His **Screen** is physical—shove, brace, slam the door, buy one breath.
  Universal Companion Actions:
- **Assist (+10):** Points the loose stone, holds the rope, signals timing, palms the key.
- **Screen (reduce Outnumbered one step):** Blocks a corridor or drags you out of a grab.
- **Anchor (Clock control):** Keeps routes from turning into dead ends; slows chase Clocks with practical movement.
  Personal Gear:
- Coil of rope, chalk nub, small pry tool, soft-soled boots, hooded cloak, wedge-stones, non-iron knife, a ring-token that "belongs" to no court.

Maebh Glass-Well — Wellborn Mirror-Seer

Archetype: Seer / Listener
Physical Description: Pale, wet-bright eyes; hair like dark riverweed; fingertips permanently stained faint blue from well-silt. Carries a small polished stone that catches light too cleanly.
Personality & Quirks: Quiet, unnervingly direct. Pauses mid-sentence as if listening to something others can't hear. Hates crowds.
Role in the Duo: Warning signs, truth pressure, reading scenes, and "what is really happening here?" support.
Key Ratings:

- Awareness 65% (omens, hidden presences)
- Investigation 55% (connects details, finds meaning)
- Sídhe Magick 45% (minor workings support, if allowed in your campaign)
- Presence 50% (stillness that unsettles)
- Composure 55% (holds steady under uncanny pressure)

Signature Traits:

- **Omen Sense:** Once per scene, Maebh's behavior can **telegraph danger**—the Director may hint a threat or Clock escalation through her reactions.
- **Mirror-Truth:** When Maebh **Assists** in social conflict, it often takes the form of a single sentence that forces clarity; good for Advantage when someone is lying badly.
- **Anchor of Still Water:** When she **Anchors**, she stabilizes fragile scenes—ritual circles, tense parleys, fearful crowds—slowing "Panic" or "Escalation" Clocks.

Universal Companion Actions:

- **Assist (+10):** "Not that door." "He's not here alone." "The well is listening."
- **Screen (reduce Outnumbered one step):** Rare—usually by drawing attention with a chilling, undeniable statement.
- **Anchor (Clock control):** Holds tension from snapping; keeps watch without sleeping; slows suspicion by reading a room early.

Personal Gear:

- Polished "well-stone" mirror, small vial for water samples, waxed cord with three beads, hooded wrap, a plain cup used only for sacred water.

Ruarc Bramble-Shoulder — Beastbound Pack-Warden

Archetype: Beast Handler / Skirmisher
Physical Description: Broad and scarred, with thorn marks along forearms and a faint animal-alertness in the eyes. Wears hide and layered cloth, moving like someone used to sudden lunges.
Personality & Quirks: Protective, blunt, laughs at fear to break it. Talks to animals as if they understand every word.
Role in the Duo: Frontline support, animal handling, and "hold the line" practicality when things turn violent.
Key Ratings:

- Melee 55% (spear/club work)
- Beast Handling 65% (calm, command, read animals)
- Athletics 50% (haul, brace, sprint)
- Awareness 45% (tracks movement, threat angles)
- Endurance 55% (keeps going)

Signature Traits:

- **Pack Discipline:** When Ruarc **Anchors**, he reduces chaos—keeps mounts calm, stops stampedes, slows "Panic" and "Pursuit" Clocks through control.
- **Brace and Bite:** When he **Screens**, he physically takes space: spear butt, shoulder, a firm shove that buys the Protagonist room.
- **Animal Whisper:** Can justify **Assist** on many scenes involving beasts—reading a wolf's intent, calming a spooked horse, spotting a predator's pattern.

Universal Companion Actions:

- **Assist (+10):** Calls timing, shoves an opening, steadies a mount, reads animal threat posture.
- **Screen (reduce Outnumbered one step):** Holds a doorway, blocks a spear thrust, draws one attacker's attention.
- **Anchor (Clock control):** Keeps the group moving; slows chase Clocks by preventing panic mistakes.

Personal Gear:

- Spear, small buckler, hide jack, animal treats pouch, cord-leash, flint, simple rations, a carved bone whistle for signaling beasts.

Bristle-Knuckle — Brownie Threshold-Mender

Archetype: Household Spirit / Saboteur-Helper
Physical Description: A knee-high, wiry fae with earth-brown skin, bright eyes, and hands like knotted roots. Hair sticks out like teased wool; nails are blackened as if from

soot and stone dust. Smells of hearth ash and damp timber.
Personality & Quirks: Proud, easily insulted, fiercely competent. Hates being watched while working. Demands "proper thanks," and will sulk if praise feels fake.
Role in the Duo: Camp stability, small repairs, quiet sabotage against enemies, and courtesy-based problem solving.
Key Ratings:

- Stealth 70% (vanishes into clutter and shadow)
- Craft/Repairs 60% (mends straps, fixes small breaks)
- Awareness 55% (notices "wrongness" in homes/routes)
- Thievery 50% (pockets, pins, knots)
- Presence 45% (small but unsettling authority)
  Signature Traits:
- **Hands of the Hearth:** When Bristle-Knuckle **Anchors**, he stabilizes domestic scenes—fires, doors, gear—slowing "Breakdown," "Supply Strain," or "Night Trouble" Clocks.
- **Petty Vengeance:** If enemies disrespect a sanctuary (mud, mockery, theft), Bristle-Knuckle can **Assist** with quiet sabotage: loosened straps, stolen keys, misdirected tools.
- **No Iron Thanks:** In iron-heavy spaces, he becomes sour and less effective (often **Disadvantage −10/−20**), but may still provide *information* through angry pointing and harsh gestures.
  Universal Companion Actions:
- **Assist (+10):** "That hinge is wrong." "That rope will snap." "Don't step there."
- **Screen (reduce Outnumbered one step):** Distraction—ash in eyes, a sharp noise, a sudden trip-line.
- **Anchor (Clock control):** Keeps the camp and thresholds functional; slows "Alarm" or "Suspicion" by tidying evidence and controlling small tells.
  Personal Gear:
- Tiny hammer, wedge-nails (non-iron), spool of waxed thread, thimble-sized salve tin, a pocket of ash, a scrap of cloth used as a "work mat."

THE FADING — BOOK 2: DIRECTOR TOOLS FOR ÉIRE

CHAPTER 1: BUILDING YOUR ÉIRE REGION

Éire is not "a map with encounters." In *The Fading*, a region is a **living argument** between the People and the Waking World: sacred places that still remember, sanctuaries that still hold (barely), routes that still work (sometimes), and pressures that never stop (Gaels, iron, Rot, old enemies, hunger, scandal, betrayal). If you build a region correctly, the campaign runs itself—because every scene has **a reason to happen**, and every victory changes what the land will tolerate next.

This chapter gives you a clean method to build a playable Éire region that supports duet play: **clear stakes, a small cast, a few decisive locations, and a handful of Clocks** that keep pressure honest without turning into bookkeeping.

What a "Region" Means in The Fading

A region is the space where your campaign's first major arc lives. It should include:

- **One Sanctuary that matters** (even if the Protagonist doesn't live there).
- **Three to five Named Places** in the waking landscape (ford, ruin, grove, village, ridge, shore).
- **One Hidden Route Network** (at least two routes; at least one is unreliable).
- **Two Factions of the Waking World** (usually rival Gael powers, or a priesthood vs a lord).
- **One Old Enemy Presence** (Fomorian, Fir Bolg, or something unquiet).
- **One Rot Pressure** (explicit or implied).
- **A question that can't be ignored**: *What must be saved, what must be sacrificed, and who decides?*

If your region has those elements, you can run months of play without "wandering." Every scene can be tied to: **sanctuary stability, route integrity, social consequence, or survival pressure.**

The Core Principle: Éire Responds to Behavior

Éire is full of witness. That doesn't mean the land is a judge; it means the land is **not neutral**.

- **Courtesy and proper form** make things smoother: doors behave, sanctuaries hold, bargains stick.
- **Iron, disrespect, and loud intrusion** make things brittle: routes slip, witnesses turn cold, small problems become Clocks.
- **The Rot** is the slow proof that even correct behavior cannot guarantee stability anymore.

As Director, your region design should make it easy to ask: **"What does this place reward, and what does it punish?"**

Step-by-Step Region Build

Step 1 — Name the Region and Its Mood

Give your region a name that sounds like it belonged to the land before maps did.

Choose a **mood** that will color your first arc:

- **Mistbound and watchful** (secrecy, pursuit, hidden roads)
- **Hunger-lean and bitter** (scarcity, raids, desperate bargains)
- **Court-splintered** (politics, rival envoys, brittle courtesy)
- **Rot-tainted** (trust fails, forms degrade, sanctuaries sour)
- **Iron-pressed** (hunts, fort-building, public fear and tests)

Write one line:
"In this region, the People fear _____ most."

Step 2 — Define the Region's Central Question

Pick one question that *every major scene can touch.*

Examples (use or adapt):

- **Can the sanctuary remain hidden without becoming cruel?**
- **Can the People survive without breaking guest-right?**
- **Can the Bright Courts and Gloam Courts cooperate long enough to matter?**
- **Is the Rot a sickness—or a verdict?**
- **What happens when a Gael lord learns a ford is "wrong"?**

Write it as a prompt you can ask at the table:
"What are you willing to do so the People are not forgotten?"

Step 3 — Place the Sanctuary Anchor

Your first region needs **one sanctuary that everything leans on**. It does not have to be safe. It must be *important.*

Decide:

- **Sanctuary Type:** hall, hollow hill, well-site, hearthstead, grove, barrow-edge refuge.
- **Who Claims It:** a court, a steward, a Lineage circle, a pact-bound keeper.
- **What It Provides:** shelter, witness, healing, diplomacy, passage, secrecy, craft, food.
- **What It Costs:** strict courtesy, tolls, geisa, debt, service, silence.

Write two lines:

- **"If this sanctuary fails, _____ happens."**
- **"If this sanctuary becomes too harsh, _____ happens."**

That second line matters. Sanctuaries under pressure often become **monsters with clean hands**.

Step 4 — Add 3–5 Named Places (Waking World)

These are places mortals can reach and name, even if they don't understand them.

Pick at least:

- **One crossing** (ford, bridge, shore landing).
- **One human site** (village, monastery, lord's hall, dún).
- **One old place** (ruin, standing stones, barrow field, ancient wood).

For each place, write:

1. **What it looks/sounds/smells like** (one vivid sentence).
2. **What it wants** (safety, trade, control, revenge, silence).
3. **What goes wrong if people push it** (iron, fire, disrespect, hunger, Rot).

Your locations should *argue with each other.* A ford that "wants" courtesy will clash with a dún that "wants" certainty.

Step 5 — Build the Hidden Routes (The Hollow Ways, But Regional)

You do not need a travel system. You need **two or three routes with personality.**

Make:

- **Route A: Reliable but expensive.** (Always works if properly approached—cost is social or material.)
- **Route B: Cheap but unreliable.** (Works until it doesn't; it's where complications breed.)
- **Optional Route C: Forbidden.** (Fast, powerful, shameful, Rot-adjacent, or enemy-controlled.)

For each route, note:

- **Entry condition:** courtesy phrase, token, offering, time of day, witness requirement.
- **Exit risk:** wrong emergence, pursuit spillover, memory loss, Rot chill, iron scrape.

- **Who watches it:** a court steward, a beast, a rival, a human hunter, an old enemy.

Routes are your duet engine: they let the Protagonist choose **speed vs safety**, **secrecy vs debt**, **help vs pride**.

Step 6 — Choose Two Waking World Pressures (Gaels)

Pick two human forces that will collide in your region. Give them names and motives.

Examples:

- **A lord** expanding land control (fences, levies, patrols).
- **A monastery** hungry for relics, certainty, and moral authority.
- **A hunt-band** that believes iron and prayer can "clean" the land.
- **A trade line** that wants safe roads and hates vanishing goods.

For each, write:

- **What they publicly say they want.**
- **What they actually want.**
- **What they fear.**

Humans are not "evil." They are **the future arriving.** That's scarier than villainy.

Step 7 — Choose One Old Enemy Thread

Pick one: **Fomorian**, **Fir Bolg**, or **unquiet** as your region's deeper danger.

- **Fomorian thread:** raids, iron, domination, hunger, cruel bargains.
- **Fir Bolg thread:** endurance, grudges, stoneholds, rightful claims, stubborn justice.
- **Unquiet thread:** revenants, shadows, wrong burials, oath-break aftermath.

Write one line:
"This enemy is winning because _____."
That's your hook.

Step 8 — Decide Where the Rot Is (Even If No One Admits It)

You don't need Rot everywhere. You need Rot somewhere that matters.

Choose:

- **A place** (sanctuary edge, well, barrow, route seam).
- **A symptom** (forms failing, witness turning cold, memory mismatch, sour hospitality, "wrong" reflections).
- **A lie** people tell about it (denial, blame, scapegoat, ritual overuse).

Write:
"If no one intervenes, the Rot will claim _____ first."

Step 9 — Create 3–5 Regional Clocks

Clocks are how Éire keeps time without forcing you into constant combat. Use them to track pressure, not to punish curiosity.

Recommended region Clocks:

- **Encroachment** (roads, fences, fortifying, mapping, naming).
- **Suspicion / Hunt** (iron tests, watchers, accusations, rumors).
- **Rot Spread** (sanctuary souring, route failures, witness loss).
- **Court Fracture** (Bright vs Gloam conflict, feuds, betrayals).
- **Old Enemy Stirring** (raids, kidnappings, creeping influence).

For each Clock, write:

- **What ticks it forward.** (noise, delays, failures, public scenes, repeated use of forbidden routes, broken courtesy)
- **What relieves it.** (clean diplomacy, misdirection, relocation, sacrifice, exposing a rival, paying debt)

- **What happens when it fills.** (a specific event you can play next session)

Keep Clock triggers concrete. Example:
Encroachment ticks when: the Protagonist leaves evidence, humans gain a map detail, a bargain is broken publicly, or a village prospers in the wrong direction.
Encroachment fills when: a dún is raised, a ford is iron-nailed, or a sanctuary becomes a known rumor.

Making the Region "Duet-Ready"

A duet region must provide **meaningful choices** without requiring a party to cover every role.

Use these safeguards:

A) Every problem has at least two solutions

One social, one practical.
If you build a threat that only combat solves, the duet becomes brittle.

B) Every solution has a cost

Not necessarily harm—often **debt, witness, exposure, or Rot pressure**.

C) Every session can touch one Clock

Even a quiet episode should move something: pressure builds or is relieved.

D) Keep the cast small

In a duet, too many NPCs becomes static.
Aim for **6–10 named NPCs** for the whole region arc (you can add later).

The Region Sheet (Write This on One Page)

Copy this as your working template:

REGION NAME:
MOOD:
CENTRAL QUESTION:

SANCTUARY ANCHOR:

- Type:
- Keeper/Claim:
- Provides:
- Costs:
- If it fails:
- If it hardens:

NAMED PLACES (3–5):

1. Name — wants — pushback consequence
2. Name — wants — pushback consequence
3. Name — wants — pushback consequence
4. (optional)
5. (optional)

HIDDEN ROUTES (2–3):

- Route A: entry condition / exit risk / watcher
- Route B: entry condition / exit risk / watcher
- Route C (optional): entry condition / exit risk / watcher

WAKING WORLD PRESSURES (2):

- Pressure 1: public want / true want / fear
- Pressure 2: public want / true want / fear

OLD ENEMY THREAD:

- Who/what:
- Winning because:

ROT:

- Where it is:
- Symptom:
- Lie told about it:

REGIONAL CLOCKS (3–5):

- Clock 1: ticks / relief / full consequence
- Clock 2: ticks / relief / full consequence
- Clock 3: ticks / relief / full consequence
- (optional)

- (optional)

Quick Tables (Optional) — For Fast Inspiration

(Use only if you want speed. These are prompts, not rules.)

A) Sanctuary Trouble (d6)

1. A guest-right breach is being quietly hidden.
2. A route into the sanctuary now exits somewhere wrong.
3. A steward is selling safety for favors.
4. The sanctuary's witness has turned cold and unresponsive.
5. A rival court claims the sanctuary is mismanaged.
6. A mortal has been invited inside—on purpose.

B) Human Pressure Events (d6)

1. A new fence line blocks an old path.
2. A priest declares a place "unclean" and draws followers.
3. A lord offers coin for stories of the "hidden folk."
4. Iron nails appear in a threshold overnight.
5. A village grows fast and hungry; it needs land.
6. A hunt-band arrives with dogs and charms.

C) Rot Symptoms (d6)

1. Offerings taste wrong, like metal or ash.
2. Witness "forgets" a courtesy phrase that always worked.
3. Reflections show a second figure behind people.
4. Warmth doesn't hold; fires burn hungry and spiteful.
5. Names slip—people misremember titles and debts.
6. A familiar place feels subtly rearranged.

D) Old Enemy Signs (d6)

1. Missing livestock, but no normal tracks.
2. A shoreline stinks of brine and old blood.
3. Stone marks appear that no one admits carving.
4. A raider's token is found where it shouldn't be.
5. An unquiet voice calls from a barrow at dusk.
6. A "helpful stranger" offers a bargain that feels wrong.

The Final Check: The Three Questions

Before you start Session 1, answer:

1. **What do the People lose if they do nothing?**
2. **What do they become if they do "whatever it takes"?**
3. **Who benefits from the Fading?**

If you can answer those, your region will generate story without wandering.

CHAPTER 2: READY-TO-RUN SCENARIOS (SHORT MODULES)

These scenarios are built to drop into any Éire region you created in Chapter 1. Each is written for duet play: a single Protagonist (plus Companion) facing **pressure**, not a dungeon crawl. None of these require new rules—run them using your normal scene framing, consequences, and **Clocks**.

How to Use These

- Each scenario is **3–6 scenes**. Run it in one session or two short sessions.
- Keep the cast small: **3–6 named NPCs** is plenty.
- For fights, remember the duet principle: **1–3 Antagonists**, not mobs.
- When in doubt, pressure the Protagonist with a Clock rather than more bodies.

Each scenario includes:

- **Premise** (what's happening)
- **Use This When** (best campaign moment)
- **Key Cast**
- **Key Places**
- **Clocks** (3 is ideal)
- **Scene Outline**
- **Complications & Escalations**
- **End States & Fallout** (how it changes your region)

SCENARIO 1: THE IRON NAIL AT THE FORD

Premise: A ford that has "always behaved" suddenly turns hostile. An iron nail has been driven into the crossing stone, and the ford's witness has gone cold. Travel falters, tempers rise, and the sanctuary's routes begin to fail.

Use This When: You want a clean opening that introduces **iron, witness, and human fear**—and forces a choice between secrecy and action.

Key Cast

- **Máel Bríde**, Gael hedge-hunter (frightened, proud, convinced iron is protection)
- **Siofra of the Reed**, a Sídhe route-warden (tired, practical, furious about the insult)
- **Brother Cormac**, local holy man (not necessarily hostile; wants certainty and order)

Key Places

- The ford and its crossing stone
- A nearby village path and a watching ridge
- A small shrine/stone circle that "hears" arguments

Clocks

- **Encroachment (Ford)**: ticks when humans gather, argue, or add "protections." Fills when the ford becomes openly controlled.
- **Suspicion / Hunt**: ticks when the Protagonist is seen near the ford or evidence is left behind.
- **Witness Turns Cold**: ticks when courtesy is broken at the ford (shouting, bloodshed, iron contact). Fills when the ford refuses all Sídhe passage for a season.

Scene Outline

1. **Opening Scene: A Route Fails**
   A trusted path deposits the Protagonist too near a human trail, or strands them in wet ground as if the land "forgot" the exit. Siofra arrives with the bad news: the ford is iron-nailed.
2. **At the Ford: The Cold Crossing**
   The ford feels wrong—silence, a sense of being unwelcome. A human charm-line and iron nail glint at the crossing stone. Humans are watching from cover, not an army—fearful, ready to be brave in a crowd.
3. **The Human Motive**
   Learn why the nail is there: livestock went missing; a child fell sick; someone swore they saw "shadows." Máel Bríde thinks he's saving people. Brother Cormac wants an explanation that keeps his flock calm.
4. **Choices Under Witness**
   Options: remove the nail quietly; bargain for its

removal; misdirect blame; plant a different "cause"; or force the issue. Courtesy matters—this is a place that remembers how you spoke.

5. **Closing Beat: The Ford Responds**
   If handled with care, the ford warms slightly—passage returns (but not trust). If mishandled, the ford becomes a contested border and the region tightens.

Complications & Escalations

- The nail is not alone: a second iron piece is hidden nearby to "keep it from healing."
- A rival Sídhe faction wants the ford to fail to weaken a sanctuary.
- If the Protagonist uses obvious magick in sight, the Hunt Clock surges.

End States & Fallout

- **Clean Success:** Ford restored; Máel Bríde becomes an uneasy contact (or a grudging rival).
- **Partial:** Ford works but demands stricter form (more offerings, more caution, more debt).
- **Failure:** The ford becomes a human-held checkpoint; routes reroute dangerously and the region tightens.

SCENARIO 2: THE BROKEN BREAD — A BREACH OF GUEST-RIGHT

Premise: A sanctuary's hospitality has been violated: someone accepted shelter and then spilled blood, stole a token, or broke courtesy in a way that stains the hearth. The sanctuary isn't "attacked"—it's **dishonored**, and that dishonor is spreading.

Use This When: You want social pressure that matters as much as violence, and you want to make **courtesy feel like survival**, not decoration.

Key Cast

- **The Keeper**, sanctuary steward (trying to hold the line, terrified of collapse)
- **The Guest**, the accused (might be guilty, might be framed, might be Rot-touched)
- **A Bright Court Envoy**, demanding purity and punishment
- **A Gloam Court Agent**, suggesting a quiet solution that smells like compromise

Key Places

- The hearth hall (where the breach happened)
- The threshold stones (where decisions "stick")
- A storage hollow where tokens and supplies are kept

Clocks

- **Sanctuary Stain**: ticks when arguments become public, when blame is careless, or when punishment is cruel.
- **Court Fracture**: ticks when Bright and Gloam factions posture and recruit.
- **Exposure**: ticks when the breach becomes gossip in the Waking World.

Scene Outline

1. **Opening Scene: The Hall Is Too Quiet**
   The sanctuary feels wrong: voices too low, offerings untouched, eyes counting exits. The Keeper begs for help—*not justice*, help.
2. **The Accusation**
   Present three plausible truths:
   - The Guest truly broke guest-right.
   - The breach happened, but the Guest is framed (token planted).
   - The Guest is Rot-stained—didn't choose it, but the harm is real.
3. **Under Witness: The Choice of Consequence**
   The Protagonist must decide how to restore the sanctuary's integrity: restitution, exile, oath-binding, compensation, or a named punishment.
4. **The Hidden Knife**
   Someone benefits from the stain: a rival court wants the sanctuary weakened; a human contact wants Sídhe infighting.

5. **Closing Beat: Hearth-Law Restored or Hardened**
   The sanctuary either regains warmth—or becomes harsher, ruled by fear.

Complications & Escalations

- The "stolen" token is not valuable materially; it is a claim-mark.
- A wrong punishment creates a future enemy inside the People.
- Mercy without restitution spreads weakness and invites repetition.

End States & Fallout

- **Restored Hearth:** Sanctuary becomes a stronger anchor; the Protagonist gains a real ally.
- **Hardened Hearth:** Sanctuary survives but becomes cruel—future visits cost more.
- **Shattered:** Court splits; routes destabilize; the region's politics become a knife-fight.

SCENARIO 3: THE WELL THAT WILL NOT REFLECT

Premise: A sacred well's surface refuses truth—reflections lag, show strangers, or show the wrong season. Offerings taste like ash. This is Rot, or something pretending to be Rot.

Use This When: You want uncanny investigation with high tension but low body count, and you want to show that the Rot is **not just "evil,"** it is *unmaking*.

Key Cast

- **Well-Keeper**, exhausted, ashamed (they hid early symptoms)
- **A Child from the Waking World**, who keeps returning to the well
- **A Stranger with Too-Perfect Manners**, offering "help" (possibly enemy, possibly court agent)

Key Places

- The well-site and its surrounding stones
- A nearby barrow edge (where wrong memory leaks)
- A small human path used for water-fetching

Clocks

- **Rot Spread (Well)**: ticks when the well is used, when offerings are refused, or when people argue loudly at the stones.
- **Suspicion**: ticks when humans notice odd water, odd reflections, odd behavior.
- **Sanctuary Weakening**: ticks when the well's witness is disrespected or overdrawn.

Scene Outline

1. **Opening Scene: The Wrong Reflection**
   The Protagonist sees something in the water that shouldn't be there: a second figure, a winter sky, a face that isn't theirs.
2. **The Well-Keeper's Confession**
   Early symptoms were hidden to avoid shame. Now it's worse. The Keeper begs the Protagonist to "set it right" without drawing court attention.
3. **Investigation: What's Feeding It?**
   It could be Rot, a barrow leak, a human charm, or a rival court's interference. Let the Protagonist chase signs: taste, sound, witness reaction, human movement.
4. **The Child**
   The child returns because the well "answers." Is the child chosen, bait, or simply thirsty? How you treat them matters—this is where the Waking World becomes real.
5. **Closing Beat: The Well Demands a Price**
   The well can be steadied, but it will demand something: a confession under witness, a token sacrificed, a debt accepted, a lie ended.

Complications & Escalations

- If the Protagonist tries to "fix it" by force, the well becomes colder.
- The stranger's help is costly: an oath, a claim, a future favor.

- The child's family may notice and bring iron "protection."

End States & Fallout

- **Well Stabilized:** Rot slows; the sanctuary gains breathing room.
- **Well Claimed:** A court (Bright or Gloam) takes control; politics intensify.
- **Well Lost:** The well becomes a hazard and a lure; future scenes get darker fast.

SCENARIO 4: THE STOLEN SKIN

Premise: A selkie-skin (or another identity-token of the sea) has been stolen. Without it, someone cannot return home—or cannot remain safely in one form. The theft is a lever for coercion, and the coast begins to boil with consequence.

Use This When: You want a clear rescue/recovery arc with strong moral pressure and a coastal mood.

Key Cast

- **The Bound One**, desperate, proud, cornered
- **The Thief**, human or fae, who believes they "deserve" what they took
- **A Coast Priest**, who sees this as proof of sin or miracle
- **A Merrow Witness**, silent but present, watching how you behave

Key Places

- A rocky cove and hidden tide-pools
- A fisher village with rumors like knives
- A sea cave that "holds" tokens

Clocks

- **Exposure (Coast)**: ticks when rumors spread or bodies wash up.
- **Desperation**: ticks when the bound one is denied or humiliated.
- **Sea-Witness Anger**: ticks when offerings are refused, when theft is excused, or when the coast is disrespected.

Scene Outline

1. **Opening Scene: A Request That Isn't a Request**
   The bound one asks for help with too much pride—because begging would be surrender.
2. **The Village of Rumor**
   Everyone "knows" a story. The truth is inside the contradictions.
3. **The Thief's Justification**
   The thief isn't cartoonish—maybe they did it for love, fear, greed, or "protection." Their motives should be comprehensible even if unforgivable.
4. **The Recovery**
   Getting the skin is rarely just theft-back. It may require bargain, witness, or a public moment.
5. **Closing Beat: The Coast Remembers**
   The sea's response is subtle at first—then real. Decide what kind of world you've built.

Complications & Escalations

- The skin is hidden in a sanctified place where Sídhe feel wrong.
- The thief offers a trade that hurts someone else.
- The bound one's rage risks drowning everyone's sympathy.

End States & Fallout

- **Skin Returned:** You gain an ally who owes a debt—or who hates owing.
- **Trade Made:** You solved it, but the cost becomes a future hook.
- **Failure:** The coast becomes dangerous; the Waking World learns the wrong lesson.

SCENARIO 5: CHAIN-TOLL AT THE HEDGE

Premise: A Fomorian captain has established a "toll" at a boundary place—chain hooks, iron presence, and forced bargains. They aren't conquering; they are **extracting**.

Use This When: You want a contained antagonist with teeth and a direct link to iron pressure.

Key Cast

- **The Chain-Captain**, brutal but controlled (a bargain-artist in armor)
- **A Captive Runner**, used as bait or messenger
- **A Sídhe Steward**, tempted to pay the toll "just this once"

Key Places

- A hedge-road choke point
- A ruined stone where chains hang like decoration
- A hidden escape route that is imperfect

Clocks

- **Toll Consolidates**: ticks when the toll is paid, when fear spreads, when no one challenges it.
- **Captives Break**: ticks as time passes; consequences become irreversible.
- **Iron Presence**: ticks when iron is brought closer to sanctuary routes.

Scene Outline

1. **Opening Scene: A Message With a Bruise**
   Someone arrives marked—physically or socially—bearing proof of the toll.
2. **Recon: The Toll Is a Trap, Not a Fort**
   The captain is not invincible; they rely on fear, leverage, and the idea that resistance is futile.
3. **The Offer**
   The captain offers terms: pay and pass; resist and suffer; bargain and be owned.
4. **The Break Point**
   Rescue captives, sabotage chains, misdirect the captain, or strike. Whatever you do, make it decisive.
5. **Closing Beat: The Region Breathes—or Chokes**
   If the toll remains, your region becomes smaller.

Complications & Escalations

- The chain-captain has a human collaborator.
- The "toll" is also a test: the captain is searching for a sanctuary.
- A rival court wants the captain to win—to weaken another faction.

End States & Fallout

- **Toll Broken:** Routes open; the captain retreats with a vow.
- **Toll Bought Off:** You gain time but lose dignity; future costs rise.
- **Toll Holds:** The region is reshaped; the campaign turns grimmer.

SCENARIO 6: THE STONE CLAIM

Premise: A Fir Bolg remnant asserts a claim over a sacred place—stones, boundary marks, and old rights. They are not raiders. They are a wall that says: *enough*.

Use This When: You want a conflict that can be solved without violence, but where violence is a tempting shortcut with long consequences.

Key Cast

- **Stone-Speaker**, Fir Bolg leader (slow, absolute, tired of being ignored)
- **A Sídhe Claimant**, insisting the sanctuary's needs override old rights
- **A Human Surveyor**, whose measuring is an unintentional act of war

Key Places

- Standing stones and their shadow-lines
- A contested sanctuary edge
- A human worksite with pegs and rope

Clocks

- **Boundary Hardens**: ticks when claims are mocked, when stones are moved, when violence occurs near the site.
- **Human Naming**: ticks when survey work continues or evidence is left unchallenged.
- **Court Fracture**: ticks when Sídhe factions argue about "pragmatism" vs "principle."

Scene Outline

1. **Opening Scene: The Stones Speak by Refusal**
   Paths subtly redirect. Animals avoid the area. The air feels like a held breath.
2. **Meet the Stone-Speaker**
   They give terms: stop the human naming; acknowledge the old boundary; pay restitution for past trespass.
3. **The Human Problem**
   The surveyor is doing their job. They do not understand they are driving a wedge into the world.
4. **The Choice**
   Do you negotiate a layered claim? Remove the human work quietly? Force a court to admit wrongdoing?
5. **Closing Beat: A Boundary Set**
   The land becomes either more stable—or more divided.

Complications & Escalations

- A Sídhe faction wants to scapegoat the Fir Bolg rather than admit fault.
- The surveyor has iron tools and guards.
- The stones react badly to lying under witness.

End States & Fallout

- **Agreement:** A new, workable boundary; reduced pressure—at the cost of pride.
- **Quiet Resolution:** Humans redirected; Fir Bolg satisfied but watchful.
- **Violence:** The Fir Bolg become an active enemy; the region's safety collapses into feud.

Using These as a Campaign Spine

Any two of these scenarios can form an arc: solve one, the fallout ticks the next. The key is to let Éire remember what the Protagonist chose.

Three-Act Adventure: The Alicorn Bargain

Adventure Premise

A selkie arrives at the Protagonist's sanctuary with urgent news: a **smuggler's ship** anchored off a lonely shore, and a **troop of Gaels** meeting it by dusk. She did not dare watch long—something about the exchange felt *foul*, like a bargain spoken too close to the tide.

The truth (known to you, the Director, not the player): a **Fomorian Sea-Lord** wants a captured unicorn's horn—an **alicorn**—and has armed a Gael chieftain with the means to steal the beast from distant hands. The chieftain has hired a smuggler captain and brigands to do the dirty work, and Act 1 begins with the Protagonist stepping into that shadowed chain of deals.

Structure Overview

- **Act 1: The Shore & the Smuggler Ship** — mystery investigation, ship infiltration, clues that point to the Gael chieftain's hold.
- **Act 2: The Chieftain's Hold & the Stolen Beast** — social pressure, pursuit, and the reveal of what "the beast" truly is (do **not** reveal until midway or later).
- **Act 3: The Sea-Lord's Price** — confrontation with the Fomorian bargain, the sword, and the final decision about who Éire becomes.

Editor's Note:

Flavor text for key locations is provided as Read-Aloud entries that can be used or paraphrased, depending on the Director's preference, but will contain information that should be related to the Protagonist in some manner during play.

Director Guide – Story Pacing

Timeline Anchor

Use this to keep the pacing consistent across Acts 1–3.

- **Act 1 (Dusk):** Selkie hook → shore → ship investigation.
- **Overnight / Morning:** Protagonist withdraws, rests if possible, then travels inland by safer routes.
- **Act 2 Arrival (Mid-Afternoon):** First sight of the hold, bailey pressure begins.
- **Act 2 Escalation (Late Afternoon):** Keep incursion / discovery phase.
- **Act 2 Mandatory Move (Dusk):** The unicorn is moved from the hold toward the shore exchange.
- **Act 3 (Nightfall onward):** Shore aftermath → Fomorian vessel departing → immediate threat → island pursuit.

If your table runs slow, do not "punish" them with extra fights—just let the **Exchange Timer** advance and tighten the shore end-beat.

ACT 1: THE SHORE & THE SMUGGLER SHIP

Summary

The selkie brings warning. The Protagonist travels to a remote shore at evening, finds signs of a recent landing, and discovers a smuggler ship anchored close enough to reach by boat or by careful wading at low tide. On board are the captain and a small band of brigands. Below decks, the Protagonist finds a **large cage** and unsettling clues about a coming exchange—yet the true nature of "the beast" remains hidden. A **missive** in the captain's quarters names the meeting place and time with the chieftain's men, pointing the campaign to Act 2.

What Act 1 Should Accomplish (Pivotal Objectives)

1. The Protagonist learns **where** and **when** the exchange will happen (via the missive and/or captain).

2. The Protagonist confirms there is a **large captive** involved (the cage and traces).
3. The Protagonist gains a clear lead: **tracks/drag-marks toward the chieftain's hold** and the named rendezvous.

Everything else—combat, stealth, bargains, sabotage—is flexible.

Opening Hook: The Selkie Comes to the Sanctuary

Read-Aloud: The Visitor at Your Threshold

> The air at your sanctuary's edge tastes of wet stone and salt. A figure stands just beyond the threshold—cloak heavy with sea-damp, hair dark as kelp, eyes bright with tide-light.
>
> She does not step in until you acknowledge her, as if even her urgency will not break the old forms. When she finally speaks, her voice is low and roughened by wind:
>
> "There is a ship off the shore. Men of the Gaels met it at dusk. They carried iron like prayers and smiled like thieves. I did not stay to learn more… but I felt a bargain in it. I felt something *taken*."

Selkie Companion

Use her as a standard Companion for the duration of Act 1. She may depart after, unless you choose to keep her involved later in Act 3.

Caelinne Tide-Sight — Selkie Witness

Archetype: Coastal Fae / Witness-Runner
Physical Description: A slender woman with wind-reddened cheeks and hair that clings in damp curls, as if it never fully dries. Her eyes shine with an odd reflective quality, like moonlight on shallow water. When she turns her head, you catch a faint scent of salt and clean rain.
Personality & Quirks: Wary, quick to judge cruelty, slower to trust kindness. Speaks politely even when furious. Hates iron near water; she cannot stop glancing at it when it appears.
Role in the Duo: Coastal guide, scout, omen-sense, and practical support during infiltration and escape.

Key Ratings (pick what matters at your table):

- Stealth 60% (shore shadows, quiet movement)
- Awareness 55% (tide changes, distant silhouettes)
- Athletics 50% (climb rocks, swim hard)
- Persuasion 40% (soft-voiced but sincere)
- Knife 45% (if pressed into a fight)
  Signature Traits (1–3):
- **Tide-Reader:** Caelinne can justify warnings about timing ("the water turns soon") and can Assist when the plan depends on shore conditions.
- **Salt-Born Patience:** When waiting is the safer choice, Caelinne helps keep panic down—her presence can steady a tense pause instead of rushing into a trap.
- **Iron-Sickened:** In iron-heavy moments, Caelinne becomes brittle; she may suffer Disadvantage on actions that require calm closeness to iron, but her discomfort is also a *tell* that warns the Protagonist.
  Universal Companion Actions:
- **Assist (+10):** Points out the safest rock path, signals watch patterns, identifies where tracks "break" unnaturally.
- **Screen:** Distracts by movement and noise—drawing eyes away from the Protagonist's approach.
- **Anchor:** Keeps watch during rest, tracks time by tide and cloud, helps slow pursuit by choosing routes the shore "hides."

Personal Gear:

A small bone-handled knife, a coil of thin cord, a waxed cloth pouch (keeps tinder and paper dry), a smooth stone charm that smells faintly of seaweed, and a folded strip of seal-grey hide she keeps hidden (she won't explain in Act 1 unless pressed).

Act 1 Pressure Tools

Pick **one** primary pressure and **one** secondary pressure. Use them to keep the ship sequence moving.

Primary Pressure Options

- **The Tide Turns:** access becomes harder; escape routes change.
- **The Brigands Grow Restless:** patrols increase; tempers shorten.
- **The Gael Lookouts Return:** a second group arrives to check the ship before dawn.

Secondary Pressure Options

- **Iron on Deck:** Caelinne's discomfort spikes at key moments.
- **A Rival Court's Shadow:** someone else is watching the ship.
- **Rot-Faint Wrongness:** a subtle wrong taste in the air around the cage.

Scene 1: The Evening Shore

Read-Aloud: Shore at Evening

> The shore lies under a bruised sky, where the last light bleeds into a cold band along the horizon. Wet stones gleam like dark glass. The sea breathes in slow pulls, the foam thinning into lace that vanishes between rocks.
>
> Farther out, a ship sits at anchor—low and patient—its silhouette a cut of black against the dying sun. No lanterns show from its deck. It looks like something that wants to be mistaken for driftwood.
>
> Along the sand, you find the marks of men: trampled lines, a dragged burden, and the ugly certainty of iron where it should not be.

What the Protagonist Can Learn Here

- **Landing signs:** bootprints, dragged marks, and the imprint of a heavy crate or object edge.
- **A small iron offering:** a nail, a bent hook, or iron filings near the drag path—placed like "protection."

Optional Detail (Do *not* reveal the unicorn):

Among the drag marks are **thin pale hairs** caught on splinters—almost silver, too long for a horse, too fine for a stag. Caelinne reacts to them with a troubled stare but offers no name.

Complication Options

- A brigand lookout is posted on a ridge with a horn (cowardly, but alert).
- The ship's boat is half-hidden among rocks, ready for quick departure.

Scene 2: First Contact with the Ship

Read-Aloud: The Ship, First Encounter

> Up close, the ship looks older than it should—tar-dark planks patched with mismatched boards, rope that has been repaired so many times it resembles braided scars. The anchor line hums softly with each pull of the sea, like a low-throated warning.
>
> The deck is quiet, but not empty-quiet. It is the kind of quiet that keeps its breath held, waiting to see if you belong here.

Approach Routes (Let the Protagonist choose)

- **Quiet climb:** rocks to hull, then up the side—risky, but discreet.
- **Boat approach:** use the ship's skiff—faster, but leaves evidence.
- **Above-deck social angle:** hail as a fisher, trader, or lost sailor—dangerous, but could avoid bloodshed.

What's True (Director Notes)

- The captain expects trouble but is confident.

- Brigands are here for pay and fear; they do not love their employer.
- The ship is rigged for **fast departure** after the exchange; the captain does not want delay.

Scene 3: Above Deck

Read-Aloud: Above Deck

> The deck boards are damp and gritty underfoot, salted by old spray and newer footprints. Coiled ropes sit like sleeping snakes. A single lantern is hooded tight, its light reduced to a bruise of amber that does not travel far.
>
> Men move with the bored vigilance of hired muscle. They do not laugh. They do not sing. They watch the shore more than they watch the sea—like they fear something coming from the land.

On-Deck Features

- **Two brigands on idle patrol**, one near the bow, one near the hatch.
- **A covered bundle of iron tools** (hooks, nails, chain links).
- **A faint smell** from below deck: animal musk mixed with something clean and sharp, almost like crushed herbs.

Likely Outcomes

- If the Protagonist is spotted, brigands challenge first rather than attack—unless the Protagonist draws steel or uses obvious magick.
- If the Protagonist takes a captive, they can learn the captain's name and the fact that "the cargo" is scheduled for an **inland exchange**.

Scene 4: Below Deck

Read-Aloud: Below Deck

> The hatch opens into a breath of darkness that smells of damp wood, rope fiber, and stale sweat. The air is thicker here—heavy with the intimacy of a place meant for cargo, not comfort.
>
> Crates are stacked along the walls. Nets hang like limp curtains. Something has scraped the planks recently, leaving pale scars in the wood. And beneath it all is a different scent—wild, clean, and furious—as if something that does not belong on ships has been forced to endure one.

Below-Deck Discoveries

- **Scrape marks** leading to a large area where cargo was recently shifted.
- **Straw and cloth** used to pad something living.
- **A broken slat** with **pale hair** snagged on it (again: do not name it).
- **A faint chalk mark** on a post: a crude symbol used by the brigands to note "dangerous cargo."

Brigand Behavior

- One brigand may be stationed near the cargo area with a spear—not because he's brave, but because he's afraid of what's inside.

Scene 5: The Cage Area (The Central Mystery Prop)

Read-Aloud: The Cage

> The cage is too large for any honest smuggling. Thick bars—wood reinforced with metal bands—form a crude prison bolted to the deck-beams. The floor beneath it is scored by repeated impacts, as if something inside struck and struck

again until it learned that rage only hurts the self.

The straw within is flattened in a single, careful oval, like a creature forced to rest without space to turn. A faint smear darkens one corner—blood, old enough to brown. And there, caught on a splintered bar, is a single pale strand that gleams when you tilt it toward the lantern. It is too fine to be common hair. It feels… wrong to touch.

What the Protagonist Can Conclude

- Whatever was kept here was **strong** and **valuable**.
- The cage suggests the smugglers expected an animal that could **hurt** them or **escape**.
- The iron reinforcement is intentional and excessive—someone wanted this captive weakened.

Do Not Reveal Yet

- If the Protagonist tries to "identify" the captive from hair or scent, keep it ambiguous: *a beast of legend, a white stag, a sacred animal, something the sea-lord wants very badly.* Hold the unicorn reveal for Act 2. Keep in mind, even if the player DOES feel confident about the unicorn's identity, the Protagonist does not know for certain, yet.

Scene 6: Captain's Quarters

Read-Aloud: Captain's Quarters

The captain's quarters are cramped but controlled: a narrow bunk, a sea-chest with a good lock, a table scarred by knife tips, and charts pinned with nails that have been reused too many times. A kettle sits cold on a small brazier, as if even comfort has been postponed until the job is done.

The room smells of ink, tar, and the faint spice of better living—someone here is paid well enough to remember what luxury tastes like.

The Missive (Mandatory Clue)

The Protagonist finds a folded letter sealed with wax (or hidden in a chart tube). It is written in practical terms and never names the true prize.

Text of the Missive (Read or Paraphrase)

"Anchor at the western reach and keep your lanterns hooded. You will receive the men at dusk and again before first light if needed.

The *beast* must be delivered inland by the old track to the chieftain's hold. Do not open the cage. Do not let it see the sea.

Payment upon delivery. Extra silver if there is no noise, no blood, and no witness.

—By order of the Chieftain's hand."

What This Gives the Protagonist

- A clear lead: **"the old track"** and **the chieftain's hold**.
- A time window: **dusk and before first light**.
- A tone: the chieftain is controlling, careful, and afraid of "witness."

Optional Secondary Clue

A scribbled note in the margin: *"Sea-Lord's gift: blade promised. Don't ask. Don't look."* (Still no unicorn reveal.)

Act 1 Antagonists

Brigand (Hired Muscle)

Brigand — Threat 2, Defense 40%, DR 1, Wounds 2
Attacks: Blade 45% (1d6) or Bow 40% (1d6)
Traits: Cowardly unless leader present; will take a bribe; hates the "cargo" and fears it.

Smuggler Captain (The Middleman)

Smuggler Captain — Threat 3, Defense 55%, DR 1–2, Wounds 3

Attacks: Blade 55% (1d8) or Pistol/Shortbow (setting-appropriate) 45% (1d6)
Traits: Practical; escape-first; will bargain if cornered; loyal to profit, not to the chieftain.

(If you want a name ready: **Captain Eóin "Gull" Raftery**—*but you can rename freely.)*

Closing the Act

However the Protagonist handles the ship—stealthy, bloody, or clever—the story must point inland.

The Protagonist leaves with enough knowledge to pursue the chieftain's connection: the **hold**, the **meeting**, and the fact that a **mysterious captive beast** is the center of the bargain.

Suggested Final Image (Optional Read-Aloud)

> Behind you, the ship creaks at anchor like a thing pretending to be calm. The tide keeps moving whether anyone is ready or not. And somewhere inland, the tracks from the shore cut through grass and stone toward a hold that believes it can buy the old world with a blade.

ACT 2: THE CHIEFTAIN'S HOLD (THE BAILEY, THE MOTTE, AND THE BEAST)

Summary

The Protagonist follows the ship's lead inland to a coastal Gael hold—**a motte-and-bailey** built at the edge of marshland where **sea-water can flood the ditch**. The hold is busy with peasants, craftsmen, and patrols; the Protagonist is best served by **stealth, observation, and careful incursion** rather than open violence.

The mystery deepens: the "beast" is not merely valuable cargo—it is **sacred**, feared, and contested. The Protagonist can uncover where it is being kept, learn the exchange plan, and attempt to intervene… but the required end-beat is that they arrive **just too late** to stop the handoff. They discover the aftermath on the shore: a **Fomorian vessel already departing**, with **two Fomorian raiders** left behind to erase traces or retrieve anything lost.

What Act 2 Should Accomplish (Pivotal Objectives)

1. The Protagonist confirms the chieftain is complicit and learns the **exchange location on the shore** and its timing (or realizes it's happening *now*).
2. The Protagonist discovers what "the beast" truly is (**UNICORN reveal** occurs **midway or later** in Act 2).
3. The Protagonist reaches the shore in time to see the **Fomorian vessel departing**, and finds **two Fomorian raiders** as the immediate threat—pointing to Act 3 (Sea-Lord's island).

Act 2 Pressure Tools

Use **three** Clocks (or simple escalating beats) to keep the hold from becoming a slow crawl.

Recommended Clocks

- **Exchange Timer** (the chieftain's men are moving *tonight*)
    - Ticks when: the Protagonist delays, gets into prolonged fights, or is forced to hide for long stretches.
    - Fills when: the beast is moved out of the hold toward the shore.
- **Hold Alarm** (suspicion hardening into action)
    - Ticks when: a sentry is avoided too closely, a body is found, a door is forced, a witness is made.
    - Fills when: patrols double, gates close, and the motte becomes sealed.
- **Marsh Tide** (the ditch and marsh change the map)
    - Ticks when: time passes; the sea breathes in.
    - Fills when: low routes flood; high routes become the only safe approach.

Tone Guidance

This is not a "clear the dungeon." This is a **watchful stronghold** where the People must move like rumor, not like an army.

The Locality: The Marsh and the Edge of Éire

Read-Aloud: The Marsh Between Shore and Hold

> The land here is neither sea nor field, but something undecided—wet ground that pretends to be solid until it swallows a careless step. Reeds shiver in the wind like a thousand small listeners. Pools of dark water mirror the sky and then break it into ripples, as if even reflection cannot be trusted.
>
> The air tastes of salt and peat. Somewhere, a bird gives a sharp cry and then goes quiet.
>
> Ahead, the hold rises from the marsh like a clenched fist: earth piled high into a hill, timber walls like ribs around it, and a ditch that gleams

> with brackish water—fed by the tide, as if the sea itself has been chained to guard the place.

Marsh Features (Director Notes)

- **Swampy marsh** stretches between the shore and hold; footpaths exist but are treacherous.
- The **ditch is tidal**—sea water can flow into it, making it deeper and colder at certain times.
- A narrow **causeway** of packed earth and stone leads to the bailey entrance.
- Off the causeway, the ground becomes a trap: mud, sudden pools, reed thickets that hide watchers.

Approaches to the Hold (Give the Protagonist Options)

- **Causeway Approach (most obvious):** easiest navigation, highest chance of being seen.
- **Marsh Crawl (stealthy, risky):** slower, but can reach the palisade's shadow unseen—if the tide cooperates.
- **Shoreline Loop:** circle wide near the coast to approach from a less watched side, possibly finding traces of the recent movement toward the exchange route.

Scene 1: First Sight of the Hold

Read-Aloud: First Impression of the Hold

> The hold is a layered thing. A rough fence line and palisade encircle the lower bailey, posts sharpened like teeth. Beyond it, the earth rises into a steep hill—**the motte**—crowned by a wooden keep that squats on its summit like a watchful beast.
>
> A **water-filled ditch** surrounds the entire complex, glimmering with brackish tide-water and marsh scum. Across that ditch stretches a **wooden flying bridge**, raised high enough that its shadow lies on the water like a blade. It looks built for sudden closure—an entrance that can become a refusal in a heartbeat.
>
> Smoke rises from within the bailey: cooking fires, smithy heat, wet wood. You can hear life behind the palisade—hammers, voices, the thin wail of a child, and the heavier cadence of armed patrols.

What the Protagonist Notices

The hold's defenses are practical, not elegant: this is a place built from fear and need, improved by each season's threat.

- **The Bailey Wall:** rough-hewn fence and palisade, tall enough to discourage climbing and to force a noisy attempt.
- **The Motte:** steep, packed earth with a carved track leading upward; vantage points allow watchers to see most of the bailey.
- **The Ditch:** water is dark, moving faintly, with a faint salt stink—tide-fed.
- **The Flying Bridge:** timber and rope; it can be raised or partially retracted. Guards control it from inside.
- **Outer Patrol:** a small patrol sometimes walks outside the palisade along the ditch edge—checking mud, reed movement, and anyone foolish enough to approach openly.

Immediate Complication Options

Pick one:

- **A patrol is approaching on the causeway** with a lantern hooded against wind.
- **A peasant cart** returns late, wheels sucking in mud; it provides cover and a possible "blend-in" moment.
- **A pair of hunting dogs** are loose near the outer ditch, nose-down and curious.

Scene 2: Bailey Exterior (Walls, Ditch, and Bridge)

Read-Aloud: Bailey Exterior — Ditch and Palisade

> Up close, the ditch looks less like a moat and more like a wound cut into the land—water pooled where soil should be, fed by the tide and made foul by the marsh. The palisade rises beyond it, timber posts stained with rain and smoke.
>
> The air here is colder. Even the wind changes as it passes over the water, bringing the faint metallic smell of wet iron—tools, nails, fittings—small denials hammered into wood.
>
> Above, the flying bridge creaks slightly, as if it resents being asked to hold the weight of men and their certainty.

Entry Methods (Stealth-Friendly)

- **Bridge Approach (social or timing-based):**
  - Blend with incoming workers (if any), or time a change of patrol.
  - This is best if the Protagonist can pass as "nothing important."
- **Palisade Shadow (climb or slip):**
  - Risky; a climb is visible unless weather/positioning hides it.
  - Look for **repair gaps**—fresh boards, places where mud has softened footing.
- **Ditch Route (high risk):**
  - In certain places, the ditch is shallow enough to wade—until the tide rises.
  - Wet, cold, and miserable. If discovered, this makes the Protagonist look like a thief by definition.

What Guards Are Doing Here

Gael sentries are not uniform soldiers; they are trained warriors with local knowledge.

- Two posted at the bridge control point.
- One or two walking the interior wall line.
- One "runner" child who carries messages—unreliable, but observant.

Scene 3: Bailey Interior (Living Hold)

Read-Aloud: Bailey Interior

> Inside the palisade, the bailey is a cramped village pressed into a ring around the motte's rising earth. Huts and sheds huddle shoulder-to-shoulder, roofs patched with reeds and rough boards. Smoke clings low and smells of peat, meat fat, and wet wool.
>
> Craftsmen work as if they have learned to ignore fear: a smith's hammer rings sharp; a cooper's mallet thuds; women haul water with a practiced impatience that says trouble is ordinary here.
>
> And through it all, armed men move with the steady rhythm of patrol—watching the people as much as they watch the walls.

The Bailey's Daily Life

This area is your tool for **information** and **misdirection**. The Protagonist can move quietly by behaving like a shadow, but they can also gain crucial details by listening and watching.

People You Can Place (choose 2–3):

- **The Smith:** knows about unusual commissions (chains, fittings, iron bands for "cargo").
- **A Washerwoman:** saw men dragging something covered near the motte path at dusk.
- **A Stable-Boy:** heard a strange sound from inside the keep—like a horse, but *not.*

- **A Carpenter:** repaired a portion of the flying bridge recently under orders.

Points of Interest (Bailey Interior)

You don't need a map—just these "stations" the Protagonist can move between:

1. **The Smithy** (iron smell; talk of bands and nails)
2. **The Stables / Animal Pens** (muddy, nervous animals, a sense of wrongness)
3. **The Longhall** (chieftain's men eat here; gossip lives here)
4. **The Motte Path** (guarded more heavily; fewer "peasants" allowed)

Investigation Clues (Keep Unicorn Hidden)

Provide clues that raise the mystery but do not name it:

- "They say it's **white** under the cloth."
- "They say it **won't drink** from a common bucket."
- "They say it **hurt a man** without touching him—like shame turned sharp."
- "They say the chieftain wants it moved **before dawn**, before the sea's men arrive."

A peasant might whisper a folk-word like **"otherworld beast"**—still not unicorn.

Scene 4: Patrols and the Motte Approach

Read-Aloud: Motte Interior — The Rise and the Watch

> The motte rises steeply, packed earth cut into a winding path that forces anyone climbing to show themselves again and again. From above, the keep watches with narrow windows like dark eyes.
>
> Halfway up, the air changes—less smoke, more wind, and the faint sense that you are entering a place where decisions are made rather than endured.
>
> Warriors patrol here with purpose. They do not drift. They do not gossip. They look down on the bailey like men who believe the world is theirs to keep.

Guarding Reality

- The bailey tolerates movement; the motte **does not**.
- The motte path is watched from above.
- The keep has at least one **interior threshold** that is monitored carefully.

Access Methods (Stealth-Focused)

- **Shadow the patrol's rhythm:** slip in behind a shift change.
- **Use bailey cover:** approach during a noisy moment (hammering, shouting, livestock movement).
- **Create a small diversion:** a minor disturbance on the far side of the bailey draws eyes.

Scene 5: Keep Interior

Read-Aloud: Keep Interior — First Step Within

> The keep smells of old wood, damp wool, and smoke that has soaked into timbers for years. Light comes in thin blades through gaps in the walls and lingers in pale stripes across the floor.
>
> Voices travel strangely here—muffled at times, sharp at others—as if the building keeps secrets by choosing what it carries.
>
> Somewhere deeper inside, you hear a sound that makes your skin prickle: the stamp of a hoof, followed by a soft chime—too clean, too bright, like a bell rung underwater.

Keep Layout

You can run the keep as three functional zones:

1. **The Hall Level:** hearth, tables, guards, chieftain's authority
2. **The Private Quarters / Solar:** papers, valuables, the plan
3. **The Lower Holding Space:** storage, cells, and the beast's confinement

The Protagonist does not need to "clear" rooms—only to reach **the plan** and then **the holding space**.

Keep Interior Encounters (Pick One Per Zone)

- **Hall Level:** 1–2 warriors on duty, plus a servant moving quietly.
- **Quarters:** a lock, a sleeping guard, or a chieftain's advisor who wakes easily.
- **Lower Space:** one frightened brigand or hired handler, posted near the holding area with a spear.

The Chieftain in His Hall

Read-Aloud: The Chieftain in His Hall

> The hall is not grand, but it is *unmistakable*. A hearth burns with the steady heat of a place that expects to be obeyed. Men sit with spears laid close, eating as if they might be interrupted at any breath.
>
> At the far end, beneath a rough-carved beam, the chieftain sits with his cloak thrown over one shoulder like a claim. His face is weathered and careful—eyes that weigh everything, mouth that does not waste words.
>
> He laughs once at something someone says, but it is a thin laugh, performed for the room. When his gaze sweeps the hall, it does not look for enemies—it looks for *problems*.

Director Use: The chieftain should be **cautious and defensive**. He avoids direct combat. He *will* sacrifice underlings, deny knowledge, or retreat behind procedure and guards. He is useful as a recurring NPC because he is not suicidal—he is a survivor with a long memory.

Chieftain Aedán mac Ruadh — Marsh-Hold Lord

Type: Gael chieftain, coastal marcher-lord, oath-maker
Physical Description: Broad-shouldered, heavy cloak pinned with worked bronze; hair graying at the temples; hands stained faintly with ink and smoke rather than honest fieldwork. A small scar crosses his chin—old, clean, not a brawler's fresh cut.
Personality: Watchful, prideful, practical. He is defensive because he believes the world is tightening and only the prepared survive. He does not relish cruelty, but he tolerates it as "necessary."
What He Wants: Control of the coast and the marsh crossing; a legendary blade to cement authority; a clean story to tell his people.
What He Fears: Being made foolish in public; the sea turning against him; the People turning his own land "wrong."
How He Behaves Under Pressure: He stalls, bargains, blames others, and retreats behind guards. If cornered, he offers a trade: silence for access, or access for a vow.

Hooks for Later Adventures:

- He can become a recurring "practical villain" who is sometimes forced to cooperate against worse threats.
- He may regret the bargain once the Sea-Lord's consequences reach his shores.
- He may try to "fix" his mistake by commissioning an iron-hunt or by seeking a court mediator.

(Combat Stat Line — only if needed)

Aedán mac Ruadh — Threat 3, Defense 50%, DR 2, Wounds 4
Attacks: Short Sword 55% (1d6), Dagger 50% (1d4)
Traits: Cautious Survivor (will withdraw rather than fight), **Guarded** (rarely alone), **Public Face** (tries to keep violence from staining his hall), **Blame-Shift** (will sacrifice a subordinate's "confession" to protect himself).

> **Director note:** If violence erupts, treat Aedán as a *consequence engine*, not a boss fight—he flees

to the motte or locks down the keep, accelerating **Hold Alarm** and **Exchange Timer**.

Scene 6: The Chieftain's Quarters

Read-Aloud: The Chieftain's Quarters

> This room is warmer than it should be, as if comfort is being insisted upon. A heavy cloak hangs from a peg, fur-lined and expensive. A carved chest sits near the bed, its wood polished by hands that expect to own things for a long time.
>
> On the table lie scraps of parchment weighted by a dagger. The ink is fresh enough to shine, and the words are written with the confidence of a man who believes he can purchase the old world with steel.

What the Protagonist Finds

You want *two* documents: one practical, one damning.

1. **The Exchange Instruction (Practical)**
   A note to the captain's men or to a runner: time and place, shore-side, near the marsh edge, where a Fomorian vessel can take on cargo quickly.
2. **The Deal's Shape (Damning, but still mysterious)**
   A short letter implying a Sea-Lord and a promised blade, without fully explaining the beast.

Example Text (Director can read/paraphrase):

> "The sea-man offers the sword upon delivery. No delays. No witnesses. Keep the beast covered until it is in their hands.
>
> If it panics, strike it with iron until it remembers it is owned."

This keeps the "beast" unnamed, but makes the chieftain's cruelty explicit.

Optional Clue: A Sketch

A crude sketch of a horse-like shape with something marked on the head—too vague to confirm. The Protagonist will *think* "stag?" or "rare horse?" but it plants the seed.

Scene 7: The Holding Space

This is where you let the truth land. Ideally, the Protagonist reaches this after at least one meaningful clue from the keep's papers, so the reveal has context.

Read-Aloud: Below the Keep — The Holding Space

> The stairs down are narrow and damp, the air growing colder with each step. Here the keep stops pretending to be a home and becomes what all strongholds truly are: a place for fear.
>
> The light is poor. The walls sweat. The scent is wrong—animal, yes, but also clean and sharp, like crushed herbs and fresh rain.
>
> Then you see the bars, the chains, the heavy bolts. And behind them—motion in the dark: white shifting like a ghost, breath steaming softly in the chill.

Read-Aloud: The Unicorn (Use Only When You Choose to Reveal)

> The lantern light catches it and the world seems to hold its breath.
>
> It is not a common horse. The shape is too perfect, the whiteness too bright, as if it refuses to accept dirt as a rule. Its eyes are dark and intelligent—painful with awareness.
>
> And from its brow rises a single horn, spiral-smooth and pale as moon-bone, marked with faint lines that resemble old script or the memory of waves.
>
> Its chest rises and falls like a bellows worked by someone else. The eyes that meet yours are aware—but burdened, as if waking is an effort. When it tries to shift its weight, the chains answer first; the iron does not merely restrain it, it *tells its body what it is allowed to do*.
>
> You understand, sickeningly, why they dared keep such a creature here. Not because they were brave—because they made it weak.

Handling the Unicorn in Act 2

The Protagonist may attempt to free it here. Let that matter—but the **required end** is still "too late" for the exchange.

So, present a harsh truth:

- The unicorn is **drugged, exhausted, or iron-weak**.
- The chains are **iron-banded**.
- The hold is **not empty**—alarms will rise if this becomes loud.
- If freed, the unicorn may not be able to run far before collapsing or being recaptured.

Give the Protagonist *hope*—but not a clean win.

What the Unicorn Can Communicate

Keep it mystical and minimal:

- A look that conveys **fear of the sea**.
- A violent recoil from iron.
- A soft chime from the horn that feels like a warning.

If you want, the unicorn can leave one subtle gift: a single pale hair or a drop of blood that refuses to stain—useful later.

Scene 8: The Exchange Has Begun

Once the Protagonist has enough proof and the reveal has landed, drive urgency.

Trigger the "Exchange Timer." The hold is moving the beast *now* (or has moved it within the last hour).

How the Protagonist Learns They're Late (Pick One)

- A servant whispers, terrified: "They took it out—covered—down the causeway."
- The Protagonist hears the flying bridge's mechanism groan: a departure.
- A patrol rushes with purpose toward the bailey gate.

Travel Beat: Marsh at Night (Optional)

> Night turns the marsh into a listening thing. The reeds stop being plants and become silhouettes. The pools stop being water and become eyes.
>
> Somewhere ahead, a chain clinks—too heavy to be a fisherman's tool—and a gull screams as if it has seen something it cannot name.

Scene 9: Shore Aftermath — The Fomorian Departure (Act 2 Culmination)

This is your mandatory end state: the Protagonist arrives to find the exchange completed, the vessel departing, and **two Fomorian raiders** left behind.

Read-Aloud: The Shore Aftermath

> The shore is scraped raw by recent haste—drag marks, bootprints, churned sand. The air stinks of brine and sweat, and something else underneath: a cold, rotten sweetness that does not belong to any honest tide.
>
> Offshore, a dark vessel pulls away from the shallows, oars biting the water in slow, powerful strokes. No lanterns burn. Its shape is wrong—too low, too patient, as if it expects the sea to obey.
>
> And on the beach, near the last churn of foam, two figures stand watching it go.
>
> They are huge, broad-shouldered, and built like old violence. Seaweed hangs from their armor like trophies. Their faces are half in shadow, but you can see their eyes: pale and hungry, fixed on you with the calm certainty of predators who believe you are already late.

Two Fomorian Raiders

These are not the Sea-Lord—just his cutters: left behind to kill witnesses, retrieve dropped items, or silence anyone who followed.

Fomorian Raider — Threat 3, Defense 45%, DR 2, Wounds 4
Attacks:

- Hooked Blade 55% (1d8), brutal close work
- Net/Chain Toss 45% (Special), entangle/drag (Director adjudication; used to control rather than kill)
  Traits: Sea-hardened; cruel discipline; hates bright light; will retreat if the Protagonist makes the shore "too public."

Director Note: These raiders don't need to fight to the death. If the Protagonist survives, the raiders may flee into the marsh—leaving behind something important (a token, a scrap of chart, a Sea-Lord mark).

Adventure Lead Into Act 3

Ensure the Protagonist learns:

- The unicorn is being taken to the **Sea-Lord's island nearby** (via overheard raider talk, a chart scrap, or a coastal landmark reference).
- The chieftain's men have been paid or are about to be paid with a **strange sword** (the promised reward).

Optional Clue (Strong Hook):

One raider carries a rough charm or seal-mark—something that "belongs" to the Sea-Lord, which can be recognized later.

ACT 3: THE SEA-LORD'S ISLAND (THE CURSED SANCTUARY)

Summary

After the shore aftermath in Act 2, the Protagonist has only a narrow window: the Fomorian vessel that carried the unicorn is already pulling away toward the Sea-Lord's nearby island. Act 3 is a **tense pursuit and infiltration**: secure a boat, track the departing vessel, land on a mist-laden island, navigate a cursed sanctuary-abode full of Fomorian presence, and reach the unicorn before the Sea-Lord severs its horn.

This act is built to feel *inevitable* and *heroic*: the Protagonist is running into the mouth of the sea.

What Act 3 Should Accomplish (Pivotal Objectives)

1. The Protagonist reaches the Sea-Lord's island within the hour (growing into night).
2. The Protagonist discovers the Sea-Lord's hoard (and can find the promised sword **before** the final confrontation).
3. The final confrontation occurs at the ritual space: the Sea-Lord approaches the chained unicorn to take the alicorn. The monologue gives the Protagonist a clear "act now" moment.

Act 3 Pressure Tools

Use **three Clocks** to keep this sharp and linear without padding.

- **Ritual Knife Drawn** (the horn is about to be taken)
    - Ticks when: the Protagonist delays, retreats, takes long rests, or gets bogged down.
    - Fills when: the Sea-Lord makes the cut.
- **Island Alarm** (Fomorians mobilize)
    - Ticks when: a sentry is spotted and survives, loud conflict erupts, doors are forced, obvious magick "shows."
    - Fills when: corridors choke with pursuers; exits tighten.
- **Mist Closes** (the island becomes a trap)
    - Ticks as time passes.
    - Fills when: visibility collapses and escape becomes a desperate scramble.

Director tip: Don't add extra encounters for "difficulty." Instead, tick Clocks and tighten choices.

SCENE 1: GETTING A BOAT & FINDING THE LINE OF TRAVEL

This scene is short and functional. The goal is to put the Protagonist on water with a believable way to track the departing vessel.

Read-Aloud Box: The Waterline Aftermath (Nightfall Begins)

> The last light is going out like a candle pinched between wet fingers. The sea is darker now—less a surface and more a presence. Foam crawls up the sand and retreats, leaving the shore slick and shining.
>
> Offshore, the Fomorian vessel is already farther than it should be, moving with an ugly steadiness. The oars bite without hurry, as if the sea has agreed to be used.
>
> The wind carries a faint tang of tar and brine—and something colder beneath it, something that does not belong to honest salt.

Options to Secure a Boat (Pick One Path; Keep It Quick)

Option A: The Smuggler's Skiff (Cleanest)

If the Protagonist didn't destroy the smuggler's skiff in act 1, it can be found beached in a rock pocket.

- **Pros:** Fast, plausible, already meant for stealth.
- **Cons:** If the Hold Alarm or shore fight got loud, this may be watched.

Option B: Fisher's Boat (Moral Pressure)

A small local craft is pulled above the tide line—belonging to a Gael fisher.

- **Pros:** Easy access.
- **Cons:** Leaves a victim of consequence (the fisher's livelihood). Good for a guilt beat.

Option C: "Borrow the Sea" (Selkie Aid)

If no boat is plausible, bring Caelinne Tide-Sight back briefly as a coastal ally—she can lead the Protagonist to a hidden skiff, or direct them to a shallow channel where the crossing is possible with improvised flotation.

> Use this if the player has no reasonable means. It's better to keep the story moving than to punish logistics.

SCENE 2: TRACKING THE FOMORIAN VESSEL (UNEVENTFUL, < 1 HOUR)

The travel should be tense but not eventful. This is about mood and direction, not a sea battle.

How the Protagonist Tracks the Ship (Use One or Two)

- **Tell-Tale Slick:** A faint tar-sheen on the surface, like oil-shadow catching starlight.
- **Dragged Weed:** Kelp strands torn and trailing in a line, snagged from shallow rocks.
- **Rhythm of Oars:** A low, repeating sound that carries on water in still air—countable, steady, wrong.
- **Selkie Sense (If Needed):** Caelinne recognizes the "taste" of their wake—brine disturbed by something that doesn't breathe like a normal crew.

Read-Aloud: The Crossing

> The little boat cuts through black water that looks deeper than it should. The oar creaks—quiet, then loud, then quiet again—because the sea never lets you forget you're making sound.
>
> Mist gathers low, not quite fog, more like the world lowering its voice. Behind you, Éire becomes a smear of shadow. Ahead, the line of travel is marked by a faint dull sheen on the water, as if something heavy passed and left a bruise.
>
> The night thickens. The hour narrows. Somewhere beyond the mist, an island waits like a held breath.

Director Note: Keep this scene short. If the player insists on complications, use a **minor cost**: cold hands, wet gear, fatigue, or a small Clock tick.

SCENE 3: ISLAND FIRST IMPRESSION (NIGHT)

Read-Aloud: Island First Impression

> The island emerges without announcing itself. One moment there is only mist and water; the next, there is rock—dark, slick, and sharp-edged—rising from the sea like the spine of something drowned.
>
> No lights welcome you. No hearth smoke rises. The air tastes of wet stone and rotting weed. The mist clings as if it has a preference for this place.
>
> Above the shoreline, you glimpse shapes that might be standing stones or broken timbers—tall silhouettes that refuse to explain themselves. And somewhere within that dark, a sound travels faintly: chain scraping on stone.

Island Mood & Truth

This is a **cursed sanctuary** in the Fomorian way: not holy, but *claimed*. It feels like a place that has been told, repeatedly, that mercy is weakness.

- **Mist-Laden:** visibility compresses.
- **Damp & Cold:** everything is slick; footing matters.

- **Fomorian Cultural Elements:** hooks, chains, harpoons, trophies, sea-bone, salted offerings, iron used as cruelty rather than craft.

SCENE 4: ISLAND EXTERIOR ONCE ASHORE

Read-Aloud: Island Exterior — General

> The shore is all stone and wet grit, with tide-pools that hold black water like little eyes. Barnacles crunch underfoot. The mist curls between boulders, sliding across your ankles like something curious.
>
> Inland, the ground rises in uneven steps. Reeds grow where they shouldn't, fed by brackish seep. Old stones stand half-sunken—maybe once a circle, now just survivors.
>
> The island smells of salt, rust, and something like spoiled incense. Every few breaths you hear it again: a faint clink, a drag, a wet scrape—metal on stone, patient and habitual.

Exterior Features (Use as a Stealth Map)

- **Rocky switchbacks** leading upward (good cover, slow movement).
- **A broken stone line** (once sacred; now used as a boundary marker by Fomorians).
- **A shallow inlet** where the Fomorian vessel likely landed (fresh drag marks, wet footprints, chain trails).
- **Listening Posts:** crude watch points—piles of rock with a gap to peer through.

Common Exterior Patrol

- One **shore sentinel** near the landing inlet.
- One **raider pair** circling toward the abode entry.

SCENE 5: THE FOMORIAN ABODE ENTRY

The abode is not a castle; it's a brutal warren built into rock and ruin—part sea cave, part hall, part shrine.

Read-Aloud: Fomorian Abode — Entry

> The entry is not a gate so much as a wound in the island's side. A dark mouth opens between stones, framed by timbers blackened with old brine. Hooks hang from a beam above it like teeth.
>
> A line of chains has been draped across the threshold—less for strength than for message. Someone has tied small offerings into the links: fish bones, scraps of cloth, bits of hair, a child's carved charm.
>
> The air that spills out is colder than the night. It smells of wet iron, old blood, and salt rubbed into wood. This is not a place that welcomes. This is a place that **collects**.

Entry Obstacles (Choose One)

- **Chain Curtain:** noisy if brushed—risking **Island Alarm**.
- **Salted Iron Nails:** unpleasant to pass; harsh on the People (apply your iron sidebar impacts).
- **Watch Pair:** two Fomorians stationed just inside (one alert, one bored).

SCENE 6: FOMORIAN ABODE INTERIOR (THE WARREN)

Run the interior as a linear sequence of **stations**. The Protagonist can't "clear" the island; they must move with intent.

Read-Aloud: Abode Interior — First Steps

> Inside, the world becomes echo. Water drips somewhere unseen, and each drop sounds like a decision. The walls are stone slicked with damp, carved crudely in places and scorched in others.
>
> Nets hang from beams like dead curtains. Harpoons lean in racks. The floor is uneven—packed earth turning to stone—marked by old stains that do not wash out.
>
> Every few paces you see the same motif: hooks. Hooks in beams. Hooks in walls. Hooks hammered into standing stones that were not meant to hold anything at all.

Interior Stations (Play in This Order)

1. **The Hook Hall** (guards, trophies, intimidation)
2. **The Hoard Cleft** (where the sword can be found *before* the ritual)
3. **The Chain Walk** (narrow passage, echo-risk, patrol bottleneck)
4. **The Horn Chamber** (final confrontation and sacrifice scene)

The Hook Hall

Read-Aloud Box: The Hook Hall

> The hall opens wider here—still low-ceilinged, but broad enough to gather a crew. The air is warmer, thick with smoke that smells wrong, like seaweed burned with old fat.
>
> Hooks hang in rows from overhead beams. Some are empty. Some hold trophies: a cracked helm, a strip of banner cloth, a bundle of hair bound with twine.
>
> At the far end, a rough table is set with cups and bones. Fomorians sit or stand around it—big silhouettes with wet armor and patient eyes—listening more than talking, like predators saving breath.

What the Protagonist Can Gain Here

- Overheard phrases: “Horn soon.” “Sea-Lord wants it awake.” “No witness goes back.”
- A sense of layout: the hoard cleft is nearby (guards glance toward it).
- A chance to slip past under cover of noise (cups, low conversation).

The Hoard Cleft (WHERE THE MAGIC SWORD IS)

This is the promised sword’s showcase. Let the Protagonist reach it before the ritual if they’re stealthy or clever.

Read-Aloud: The Hoard Cleft

> A split in the stone opens into a cramped chamber that feels too dry for a sea cave—like the rock itself is hoarding warmth. Treasure is piled not like wealth, but like **proof**: coins in bowls, rings threaded on cord, blades stacked with careless confidence.
>
> There are stranger things too—carved stone faces, a broken saint’s icon salted into rot, a length of chain that looks older than the island.
>
> And set apart from the rest, laid on a folded strip of dark cloth, is a sword that does not match any metal you know. Its blade is a shimmering silver-blue—moonlight made solid—neither iron nor bronze. It does not gleam loudly. It simply… *exists with certainty.*
>
> When you look at it too long, you feel a faint hum in your teeth, as if the blade is tasting the air.

The Sword (Artifact)

Súil-Gorm, the Truth-Hunger Blade

Weapon Line: Súil-Gorm — Blades, [Melee], 1d8, Reach, One-Hand; Luminous (short-range); Truth-Pressure; Willful; Blood-Lust
Description: The blade is a cold silver-blue that seems lit from within, as if forged from deep water and winter moon. The edge is flawless but not flashy; it refuses theatrical shine. The hilt is wrapped in dark leather with faint salt-staining, and the guard is shaped like a subtle wave crest. It never speaks,

yet it communicates through **hums**—low tones of warning, sharp pulses of approval, and a hungry vibration when violence nears. When drawn, it casts a **soft, Sídhe-like illumination** around the wielder—bright enough to see within a short range, but strangely muted at distance, as if the light does not want to travel.

Unique Mechanics (One-on-One Compatible)

- **Presence of the Blade:** Súil-Gorm has **Presence 60%**.
    - When the wielder attempts to use it for something the blade "refuses" (mercy, concealment, restraint), resolve a **contested Presence vs Presence** (wielder vs blade).
    - On the wielder's Win: the blade yields (for now).
    - On a Lesser Win: it yields but "complains" (hum, heat, vibration) and may impose a future complication at the Director's discretion.
    - On a Loss: the blade resists—refusing to be drawn, leaping from the hand, or pulling toward violence.
- **Leap Draw:** The sword can **leap from its sheath** at the wielder's command (or on its own when it "smells" imminent violence). Treat this as a dramatic flourish that can justify **Advantage** (or +10) on an opening action when it fits the fiction.
- **Truth-Pressure (Throat Test):** When the blade is held to someone's throat and a demand is made for truth, it exerts a terrible certainty.
    - Use **Presence-based social pressure** as the primary resolution at your table (Protagonist's approach), typically granting **Advantage** or **+10** when the blade is clearly dominant in the scene.
    - The target can still resist by force of will, fear, or deception—this is not mind control; it's pressure that makes lying harder to sustain without consequence.
- **Blood-Lust:** Prolonged fighting can awaken the blade's hunger.
    - If the wielder uses Súil-Gorm through an extended fight or multiple consecutive violent scenes, start a simple Clock: **Hunger of Súil-Gorm**.
    - When it fills, the blade may lash out at the nearest valid target (friend or foe) unless the wielder asserts control with a **Presence vs Presence** contest.
    - On a Loss, the blade acts—treat as a sudden strike that creates immediate fallout.

Director note: This artifact is potent. Its cost is not numbers—it is **relationship**. It will try to turn the story.

The Chain Walk (The Bottleneck)

A narrow passage that forces closeness to iron, noise risk, and pursuit.

Read-Aloud: The Chain Walk

> The passage narrows until your shoulders feel the stone. Chains run along the walls as handholds, slick with damp and old salt. Every link is a potential sound. Every breath echoes back wrong.
>
> Halfway through, you see scratch marks—something dragged through here recently, heavy and resisting. The floor is scored in lines that curve like panic.
>
> Ahead, faintly, you hear a sound that does not belong to Fomorians: a strained snort, a hoovescrape, and a high, trembling chime—like a bell trying not to ring.

Director Use: This is where you tick **Ritual Knife Drawn** if the Protagonist delays.

SCENE 7: FINAL CONFRONTATION — THE HORN CHAMBER

This is the ritual sacrifice scene. The unicorn is now mostly conscious, chained, and reacting.

Read-Aloud: The Horn Chamber (Approach / Reveal)

> The chamber opens into a hollowed vault where the stone ceiling sweats and the mist creeps in low like a living thing. Old standing stones have been dragged here or grown here—impossible to say—which now bear hooks and chains hammered into them.
>
> In the center, a shape of white stands out like a wound in the dark. The unicorn is chained to a ring-bolt set in stone, its body trembling with exhaustion and fury. Its head lifts as you enter, eyes wide and wet with awareness. When it pulls, the chains answer with a cruel music, and the horn catches what little light exists and throws it back like cold moon.
>
> Around it, the Fomorians have made a ritual out of practicality: bowls, knives, salt, and iron laid out like tools on a butcher's table.

Read-Aloud Box: The Sea-Lord Appears (Final Confrontation Setup)

> The Sea-Lord steps into view as if he has always been there and the mist simply decided to show him. He is taller than the others—broad as a doorframe—his armor worked from sea-dark metal and bone, hung with chains that clink softly with each movement.
>
> His face is a harsh sculpture: heavy brow, deep-set pale eyes, and a mouth that looks made for oaths spoken without mercy. Barnacle scars ridge his forearms. Seaweed hangs from his shoulders like a wet mantle.
>
> He does not rush. He approaches the unicorn the way a man approaches a prize he believes is already owned. In one hand he carries a ritual blade, curved and dark. In the other he holds a length of chain like a leash.
>
> The unicorn snorts—high, angry, terrified—and the sound makes the chamber feel suddenly too small.

Read-Aloud: Sea-Lord Monologue

> "Look at it," the Sea-Lord says, voice low as a tide turning. "The People cling to such creatures as proof that the world once belonged to softness. They tell stories: purity, blessing, mercy. They dress hunger in poetry."
>
> He drags the blade's edge gently along the air near the horn, not yet touching it. The unicorn shudders at the nearness.
>
> "But the world is iron and salt," he continues, almost tender. "It is the hook. It is the chain. It is the knife that makes value real."
>
> He leans closer, pale eyes bright with certainty.
>
> "The horn is not sacred. The horn is **useful**. And usefulness is the only holiness the sea recognizes."
>
> The blade rises. The Sea-Lord's shadow falls over the unicorn's brow.
>
> "Now—be still," he murmurs, and the knife begins its descent.

That is your moment. The Protagonist must act.

Sea-Lord Dargan Brine-Crowned — Fomorian Sea-Lord

Type: Fomorian ruler, island-claimer, ritual pragmatist
Physical Description: Towering, thick-limbed, and built like old storm-rock. His skin is scarred with barnacle-like ridges and pale marks where salt has eaten old wounds. His armor blends sea-dark plates, bone, and chain—trophies worked into protection. He smells of brine, old blood, and smoke that never fully leaves.
Personality: Patient, absolute, and contemptuously calm. He does not rage—he **decides**. He believes mercy is a weakness

the world punishes.
What He Wants: The alicorn (horn), its power as leverage, and the humiliation of the People's sacred symbols.
What He Fears: A story he can't control—witnesses who survive and spread a legend that he failed.
How He Uses Others: As tools. He bargains because it's efficient, not because he honors compromise.
How He Behaves Under Pressure: He tightens the room: orders, blocks exits, uses captives as leverage, and forces choices.
Future Hooks:

- If he survives, he becomes a recurring sea-threat: raids, bargains, island calls, coastal fear.
- If he loses the horn, he becomes obsessed with recovering face and power.
- If he loses the unicorn publicly (witness survives), his reputation fractures among his own kind.

Sea-Lord Dargan Brine-Crowned — Threat 5, Defense 55%, DR 4, Wounds 8

Attacks:

- Brine Blade 65% (1d12), heavy ritual weapon
- Chain-Hook 55% (1d10), control/drag (Director rulings for entangle)
  Traits:
- **Terror Presence:** His arrival can justify Disadvantage on hesitant actions if the scene supports it.
- **Sea-Hardened:** Ignores minor pain; relentless.
- **Ritual Pragmatist:** Will harm the unicorn to force compliance; will threaten it rather than chase the Protagonist.
- **Claimed Ground:** In his horn chamber, he has home-field certainty—treat as improved positioning for him unless the Protagonist flips the fiction.

Fomorian Population

Use these to stock the island without turning it into a slog. Keep fights small.

Fomorian Deepguard — Threat 4, Defense 50%, DR 3, Wounds 6

Attacks: Heavy Axe 60% (1d10), Harpoon 50% (1d8, Near, drag on strong hit)
Traits: Disciplined; holds corridors; hard to scare off.

Fomorian Hook-Priest — Threat 4, Defense 45%, DR 2, Wounds 4

Attacks: Ritual Knife 55% (1d8), Salt-Ash Throw 45% (control; irritates eyes/breath; Director adjudication)
Traits: Ritual authority; uses fear and ceremony; will call for alarm rather than duel.

Fomorian Shore Sentinel — Threat 3, Defense 40%, DR 2, Wounds 3

Attacks: Spear 55% (1d8), Horn-Call (raises alarm; Clock pressure)
Traits: Watchful; cowardly alone; dangerous as a witness.

(You already have "Fomorian Raider" from act 2—reuse it as needed.)

RUNNING THE FINAL CHAMBER

The Unicorn's State

Now mostly conscious:

- It reacts to voices and movement.
- It pulls against chains and trembles with fear and fury.
- It recoils from iron, and its breathing speeds when the Sea-Lord nears.

The unicorn is not a "combatant." It is a sacred being under torture. Treat it as an emotional engine and an urgent objective, not an ally that solves the scene.

Common Protagonist Plans

- **Stealth Intervention:** strike the chain ring, sabotage the ritual blade, snatch the horn-tool, or free one anchor point.
- **Social Interruption:** use presence and witness—challenge, demand, call out the bargain as shameful, force the Sea-Lord to respond.
- **Artifact Leverage:** if Súil-Gorm is acquired beforehand, it can change the tone—light, truth pressure, and a violent "will."

How the Scene Ends

You can end Act 3 in a few clean ways while keeping it dramatic:

End-State A: Unicorn Saved (Heroic Win)

The Protagonist prevents the cut and gets the unicorn moving (even barely) toward escape—by breaking chains, driving the Sea-Lord back, or creating a break in the chamber. This should still cost something: injury, pursuit, or a future debt.

End-State B: Alicorn Lost, Unicorn Lives (Bitter Win)

The Sea-Lord gets a partial cut or a horn fragment, but the unicorn survives and escapes. This sets up a strong campaign consequence: the Sea-Lord now has **real power**, and the People have a living symbol saved at a terrible cost.

End-State C: Unicorn Dies (Tragedy, Strong Campaign Hook)

The Protagonist fails to stop the cut, but can still claim the sword, kill/drive off the Sea-Lord, or escape with proof. This becomes a grim legend that reshapes Éire.

> Director note: Don't force tragedy—let it emerge from play. But do allow it to matter if it happens.

Placement of the Sword (So It Can Be Found Before the Ritual)

Default: **Hoard Cleft** is encountered before the Horn Chamber.
If the player skips it, you can still place Súil-Gorm as:

- carried by a **Deepguard** as a "gift being escorted," or
- leaned near the ritual table as the Sea-Lord's chosen reward.

But the cleanest dramatic arc is: **find sword → feel its will → enter ritual → choose how to wield it.**

Optional Read-Aloud: The Sword's First Draw

> The blade comes free with a sound you feel more than hear—like a low note struck in bone. The chamber around you brightens, not with torchlight, but with a cold, contained glow that clings to your hands and the blade's edge.
>
> The hum changes as your grip settles, as if the sword is tasting your intent. For a heartbeat it feels eager. Then it feels… judgmental.
>
> It does not speak. It simply demands that your choices become **real**.

Final Notes for Act 3 Flow

- Keep travel uneventful and under an hour.
- Let the island be atmospheric, dangerous, and tight.
- Keep encounters minimal: one patrol, one bottleneck, then the chamber.
- Use the monologue to hand the player the "this is your moment" lever—then let them decide how heroic they are willing to be.

EPILOGUE

Use the epilogue that matches what happened at your table. All three assume the same immediate aftermath beat: **a retinue of the Bright Court arrives** in force, turning the island from a private horror into a contested ground the Sea-Lord cannot hold. Continue with the following Shared Aftermath, then go to the End-State that occurred during play of the final scene of Act 3 (A, B, or C).

Shared Aftermath (Applies to All End-States)

Read-Aloud: The Bright Court Arrives

> The mist shivers. Not from wind—something *else* moves through it, like a veil being drawn aside by hands that remember ceremony.
>
> From the shoreline, pale lights appear—small at first, then more, moving with purpose. Shapes follow: figures in cloaks the color of moonlit ash and woven green, faces half-hidden, eyes bright with courtfire. Their footsteps do not splash so much as *refuse* to disturb the water.
>
> A horn sounds—soft, clear, and impossibly steady—answered by a ripple of Glamour that makes the island's shadows recoil.
>
> The Bright Court has come. Not to bargain. Not to plead. To **end** what is happening here.

Director Notes:

- The retinue's arrival is not a "rescue that steals victory." It is a *consequence of heroism*: the Protagonist's actions created a beacon—witness, disturbance, destiny-shift, whatever best fits your table's fiction.
- The retinue forces surviving Fomorians to **flee** or be driven into the sea. If the Sea-Lord still lives, he is among those forced to withdraw—furious, humiliated, and made *dangerous for later.*

END-STATE A: UNICORN SAVED (Heroic Win)

Read-Aloud: Epilogue — The Unicorn Saved

> The island's cruelty breaks like rotten wood under a hard boot. Where hooks once ruled, bright voices speak names the stone has not heard in a long time. Where chains dragged, court-light turns the damp air clean.
>
> The unicorn stands trembling, still marked by iron and fear, but alive—alive enough to lift its head as the Bright Court approaches. It does not bolt. It watches them with exhausted, ancient suspicion… and then, slowly, it exhales.
>
> A figure from the retinue steps forward and offers an open palm—no iron, no threat, only form and witness. Another loosens the last cruel bindings with a careful reverence, as if touching a wound without making it deeper.
>
> Offshore, you glimpse motion in the mist—Fomorians retreating, slipping away like stains dragged into deeper water. The Sea-Lord's

silhouette vanishes among them, robbed of his certainty.

When the unicorn finally moves, it does so toward you first—close enough that its breath warms your hands. The horn catches the Bright Court's light and throws it back in a pale arc that feels like a blessing and a promise.

Then, escorted by the retinue, it is led down to the shore. The boat waits. The mainland waits. Éire, for once, feels like it has gained something back.

Director Notes:

- If the Protagonist has Súil-Gorm, this is a perfect moment for the sword to "quiet" (a satisfied low hum), or to resist being sheathed if it wants more blood.
- This ending creates a living symbol that can return later—healing sanctuaries, inspiring Bright Court intervention, or drawing hunters.

END-STATE RESULTS:

The Bright Court's escort back to the mainland is not an ending—it is a **procession**, and processions draw eyes. Word spreads faster than truth: a sacred beast returned, a Sea-Lord driven off, a mortal chieftain entangled in an otherworld bargain. Some sanctuaries will treat the Protagonist as a living witness and insist on hospitality; others will fear that the Protagonist has become a beacon that drags iron and hooks toward them. The Sea-Lord's humiliation curdles into intent—he begins testing the coast for weak places, hunting for a replacement trophy or a revenge that "restores the story" in his favor. Meanwhile, the unicorn's survival becomes a **political object** among the People: Bright Court envoys want it protected and hidden, but rivals may insist it should be seen—paraded, sworn over, used as proof that the Fading can be resisted. If Súil-Gorm was taken, it complicates every gathering: the blade's hum grows louder around lies, and its "truth-hunger" may turn diplomacy into danger.

END-STATE B: ALICORN LOST, UNICORN LIVES (Bitter Win)

Read-Aloud: Epilogue — The Unicorn Lives, the Horn is Taken

The Bright Court arrives to an island that still reeks of ritual. Their lights cut through mist, but they cannot unspill what has already been spilled.

The unicorn is alive—barely—but the sight of it turns the retinue's composure into something sharper. Its breath comes in harsh pulls. Its flank quivers. And from its brow, the spiral of its horn is broken—taken—leaving a wound that looks too clean and too wrong, as if the world has been edited by a cruel hand.

Court attendants move fast, speaking low, steady words that keep panic from becoming death. They bind the wound with cloth that glows faintly, and the unicorn's legs tremble as it tries to stand.

In the distance, beyond the reach of the court's immediate wrath, Fomorians are already fleeing—shadows with hooks and chains slipping away into fog. Somewhere among them the Sea-Lord retreats, clutching what he stole, his victory small and his vengeance future-shaped.

When the unicorn finally rises, it does not look triumphant. It looks *enduring*.

The Bright Court forms a protective ring as they guide it toward the shore. Every step is a refusal to let the Sea-Lord define the story as "mine."

You leave the island with the unicorn alive—and that matters. But the night does not let you forget what was taken. The sea behind you feels heavier, like it now carries a secret that will not stay buried.

Director Notes (Campaign Consequence):

- The Sea-Lord now possesses a potent trophy (the alicorn) and will become more dangerous, more confident, or more ritual-bold in future arcs.
- This is a strong "the war continues" ending that preserves hope without denying cost.

END-STATE RESULTS:

The Bright Court returns with the unicorn alive, but the broken horn leaves a wound that is more than flesh—an **absence** that changes how witnesses behave. Some believe the missing alicorn will empower rot-craft, sea-rituals, or bargains that make iron feel even heavier; others argue the unicorn's survival is a miracle that must be guarded at all costs. The Sea-Lord retreats into mist with the trophy, and that trophy becomes leverage: he can now bargain with other threats, buy mercenaries, or tempt desperate mortals who want "miracles" without paying the right kind of price. The chieftain's promised sword may still be unpaid—creating a second pressure line: the Sea-Lord's anger turns toward the chieftain, and the chieftain's fear turns toward the People, making Éire's coastline feel suddenly *crowded with knives*. The Protagonist may be asked to hunt the alicorn's trail, sabotage what the Sea-Lord intends to make from it, or escort the wounded unicorn through sanctuaries where not everyone agrees on what should happen next.

END-STATE C: UNICORN DIES (Tragic Win / Dark Consequence)

Read-Aloud: Epilogue — The Unicorn Dies

The Bright Court comes too late for mercy to be clean. Their lights cut the mist, their forms and names strike the island like law returning… but the chamber already smells of what cannot be unsaid.

The unicorn lies still. The whiteness of it looks unreal against damp stone, like moonlight that has fallen and will not rise again. The wound at its brow is a silence so complete it makes the hooks and chains feel suddenly obscene—childish tools that believed they could own holiness.

For a moment, even the retinue does not speak. One of them kneels. Another closes their eyes as if listening for a note that has gone missing from the world.

Then the Bright Court moves—not with grief alone, but with consequence. Glamour flares. The island's shadows recoil. Fomorians scatter, forced from their claimed sanctuary as if driven by a tide they cannot fight. Those who remain are cut down or made to flee into the sea's black mouth.

In the distance, the Sea-Lord retreats into mist with the last of his certainty in tatters—alive, perhaps, but no longer unchallenged. If he carries the horn, it is not a victory that shines. It is a theft that **stinks**.

The retinue gathers around the fallen unicorn as if forming a wall against forgetting. They wrap it in cloth and carry it with reverence—proof that the People still keep faith even when the world does not.

When you leave the island, the sea is quiet. Not peaceful—quiet like a witness holding its breath. And in that quiet you feel the shape of the story that will follow you: you did not save the unicorn… but you refused to let the Sea-Lord take it without being seen.

Director Notes (Campaign Consequence):

- This ending is tragic but powerful: it can catalyze vengeance, political shifts, Bright Court mobilization, and Sanctuary instability or renewed purpose.
- If Súil-Gorm was recovered, it may hum with restless hunger—this is where "blood-lust" themes can echo later.

END-STATE RESULTS:

The Bright Court drives the island clean, but the death cannot be driven out—the story becomes a bruise on Éire. Sanctuaries react in different ways: some demand vengeance, others demand secrecy, and a few fall into despair, treating the loss as proof that the Fading is inevitable. The Sea-Lord's retreat (especially if he carries the horn) becomes a **dark legend** that emboldens lesser raiders and corrupt bargains: if a sacred thing can be butchered, then nothing is safe. The Protagonist becomes a dangerous kind of witness—someone whose presence can ignite conflict or catalyze unity. Mortals may begin hunting rumors of "the horn," believing it can heal, curse, or crown a king; remnants of older enemies may treat the event as permission to rise. If Súil-Gorm was recovered, the blade's hum may become restless and sharp in courtly spaces, pulling the Protagonist toward "necessary violence" at the worst possible times—turning grief into a test of whether truth can be held without becoming cruelty.

Growth Point Awards

Award Growth Points immediately after the epilogue, while the emotional beat is still fresh.

Recommended GP Award (Typical): 3–5 GP

Use this scale based on what happened at the table:

- **+1 GP** — The Protagonist pursued the mystery decisively (ship → hold → island) and kept momentum under pressure.
- **+1 GP** — The Protagonist took meaningful risks (infiltration, confrontation, or sacrifice) rather than retreating to safety.
- **+1 GP** — The Protagonist protected a vulnerable life, witness, or Companion under iron/terror conditions.
- **+1 GP** — The Protagonist created a lasting narrative consequence (exposed the chieftain, acquired Súil-Gorm, made the Sea-Lord flee, saved/escorted the unicorn).
- **+1 GP (optional, "Heroic Moment")** — The Protagonist acted at the monologue's cue in a way that was unmistakably bold or costly.

End-State Bonus (choose one):

- **Unicorn Saved:** +1 GP (symbol preserved; hope secured)
- **Horn Taken, Unicorn Lives:** +1 GP (survival under loss; hard victory)
- **Unicorn Dies:** +1 GP (witness and consequence; tragedy carried with honor)

Director Tip: GP should reflect the *story's weight* and the Protagonist's choices—not simply body count.

Iron in the Adventure (Pressure, Pain, and Practical Impact)

Iron is not merely a metal in Éire. It is a statement. It says: *the world is only what I can hammer into shape.*

For the People, that certainty is poisonous. Iron near the skin feels like cold teeth against the soul—dulling senses, souring courage, and making even simple workings come out wrong. The Companion's reactions are often more obvious: flinches, nausea, anger, or a sudden fragile silence.

Directors should treat iron as a **reliable source of pressure**: it narrows options, sharpens consequences, and turns quiet scenes into ticking moments.

Practical Impact

When iron is meaningfully present, apply one or more of the following as fiction demands:

- **Disadvantage** on Sídhe workings or Sídhe Magick attempts in iron-heavy conditions.
- A situational **–10 to –20** to the Protagonist's **modified skill value** when iron is close, touching, or embedded in the environment.
- A **Clock tick** when iron causes a working to "show" (odd tell, wrong witness reaction, noise, or attention).
- **Companion strain:** the Companion may hesitate, refuse close contact, or require reassurance before assisting in iron-saturated spaces.

Iron by Location (This Adventure)

Smuggler's Ship (Act 1):

- Iron is present as fittings, bands, tools, and "practical" hardware. It's not a forge, but it is everywhere in small doses.
- Typical impact: **–10** to subtle workings below deck; **Disadvantage** if casting while pressed against iron-banded cargo or chains.
- Narrative feel: *the sea is natural; the ship is a nailed-together lie floating on it.*

Chieftain's Hold (Act 2):

- Iron is present as nails, hinges, weapons, and reinforced restraint—especially near the keep and holding spaces.
- Typical impact: **–10** in the bailey where iron is incidental; **–20 or Disadvantage** near the holding space, chains, and iron-banded doors.
- Narrative feel: *human permanence asserting itself—iron as policy.*

Sea-Lord's Island (Act 3):

- Iron becomes deliberate and ritualized: hooks, harpoons, chained offerings, and iron meant to weaken sacred things.
- Typical impact: **Disadvantage** is common; **–20** is appropriate in the deepest "cursed sanctuary" spaces where iron is part of the place's purpose.
- Narrative feel: *iron used as a blasphemy—certainty weaponized against the holy.*

Director note: Iron should not "delete" player agency. It should force the Protagonist to choose: endure it, avoid it, bargain around it, or pay a price to act anyway.

Glossary of Éire Terms — *The Fading* (Setting Vocabulary)

An Sí — **"The People."** A respectful term for the Sídhe as a whole; used when speaking of the folk collectively, especially under witness.

Bargain — A negotiated exchange that is meant to *bind*, not merely persuade. In Éire, bargains carry weight because the land remembers and the courts enforce.

Barrow — A mound of the old dead; a place where memory, hunger, and the unquiet press close to the surface, and where the boundary feels thin.

Beannacht — A blessing spoken as courtesy; not always religious, but often binding in the sense that it "sets" the tone of an encounter.

Bean Sí (Banshee) — A death-omen presence tied to lineage, grief, and prophecy. Not always hostile, but never meaningless.

Bright Courts — The court-leaning that believes survival depends on hospitality, proper form, and being recognizable as "the People" in the old way.

Changeling — A stolen-and-swapped life: a child or person taken, replaced, or altered through uncanny exchange. A word that carries terror and shame among mortals, and bitter pragmatism among the Sídhe.

Courtesy — The living law of the Sídhe: greetings, offerings, titles, guest-right, and controlled speech that turns violence into consequence and chaos into order.

Court — A political and cultural power of the Sídhe: a hall, a sanctuary network, its nobles and retainers, and the web of oaths and rivalries that sustain it.

Court-Knot — A knotted token or cord-mark indicating affiliation, invitation, safe-passage, or claim. A small object that can start or end a feud.

Craft-Token — A made thing that carries meaning beyond function: a stitch that remembers, a knot that "holds," a bowl that knows hospitality.

Dún — A fort or stronghold of the Waking World; a human-made assertion of permanence that the Sídhe often read as a slow siege.

Éire — The island and its living character: not merely geography, but a place that remembers names, favors witness, and resents disrespect.

Essence — The inner well of Sídhe power and presence: what is spent when the People press will into the world, and what leaves them hollow when overdrawn.

The Fading — The slow vanishing of Sídhe certainty: lost routes, thinning sanctuaries, weakening witness, and the creeping sense that the world is forgetting the People on purpose.

Fir Bolg — The old folk of endurance and stone-memory in this module's framing: remnants, wardens, and hard survivors with long grudges and longer patience.

Form — The correct shape of an act: the token held, the phrase spoken, the offering given, the posture taken. Without form, power becomes noise.

Geis — A binding taboo or obligation laid upon someone by oath, custom, or consequence. It is not always "magick"—sometimes it is simply law so old it feels like fate.

The Gaels — Human cultures pressing into Sídhe spaces: clans, settlements, priests, and hunters whose growth reshapes Éire's balance.

Gloam Courts — The court-leaning that believes survival now requires secrecy, sharp bargains, and hard choices the Bright cannot admit aloud.

Guest-Right — The sacred expectation that a host offers safety and a guest offers restraint; breaking it stains a house and can echo for seasons.

Hearth-Law — The rules of shelter, warmth, and belonging: who may eat, who may stay, who must leave, and what debts hospitality creates.

Hollow Hill — A place of hidden depth: a sanctuary, a passage, or a court-seat concealed by land and glamour, older than roads.

The Hollow Ways — The secret paths and crossings that do not obey mortal maps: the "in-between" routes that keep the Sídhe moving while the world closes.

Iron-Binding — Any practice that uses iron as a weapon of certainty: nails in thresholds, iron bands on doors, ironcarried openly to sour Sídhe workings.

Lineage — A way of being Sídhe: inherited nature, court role, and cultural identity. In *The Fading*, the Six Lineages

define how the People endure.

The Lost Roads — Routes that once held true but no longer do; a phrase spoken with fear, because a lost road is often the first sign a sanctuary is failing.

Merrow — A sea-fae presence tied to tide-law, storms, and deep bargains; beautiful, perilous, and never "just" a sailor's tale.

Oath — A promise made with intent and consequence; in Éire, an oath is a cornerstone of politics and a weapon of survival.

Offering — A small, sincere gift given to set courtesy, appease witness, or prove good faith: salt, milk, bread, breath, story, warmth.

The People — A common respectful shorthand for the Sídhe; used especially in mixed company when speaking too plainly might invite attention.

Rot — Unmaking and corruption: a souring of sanctuaries, a blurring of truth, a weakening of form and witness. It feels like damp that gets into everything.

Sanctuary — A protected Sídhe place—hall, hearth-site, well-site, hidden grove—where courtesy is law and survival is organized.

Seeming — The surface-truth a thing presents: beauty, glamour, disguise, and the soft lie that becomes believable when everyone agrees to see it.

Sídhe — The fae folk of Éire's hidden places; bound to courtesy, threatened by iron, and fighting not only for survival but for remembrance.

Threshold — The line between inside and outside, safe and unsafe, welcome and refusal. Doors, gates, fords, and edges all count.

Token — A physical object used to carry meaning: cords, rings, stones, reeds, ash, bread, salt. Tokens make intent portable.

Tuatha Dé Danann — The mythic exemplars of Sídhe memory: named as ancestors, standards, or claims, and invoked in courts as praise or accusation.

Witness — The presence that "counts" an act: hearth, stone, well, threshold, ford, or gathered eyes. Witness turns a moment into consequence.

Working — A Sídhe term for a spell-like act: a shaped intention performed with form, token, and courtesy. "Working" implies craft and consequence, not spectacle.

Recommended Reading and Viewing List:

The Broken Sword by Poul Anderson

The Armies of Elfland by Poul Anderson

Elric of Melniboné by Michael Moorcock

(any Elric novels, as they are the basis for the Companion rules)

Corum: The Prince in the Scarlet Robe by Michael Moorcock

Hellboy 2: The Golden Army by Guillermo del Toro and Mike Mignola

Legend directed by Ridley Scott